Sam Harris

THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN A WILDERNESS.

OR,

The busines of a Christian, both Antecedaneous to, Concomitant of, and Consequent upon, a sore and heavy Visitation, Represented in several SERMONS.

First preach'd to his own Family, lying under such Visitation: And now made Publick as a Thank-Offering to the Lord his Healer.

By S. S. a Servant of God in the Gospel of his Son.

All the Paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his Covenant and his Testimonies, Psal. 25. 10.

Mala pœnalia non sunt vere mala, quia fluunt a summo Bono, nimirum Deo; ducunt ad summum Bonum, nimirum fruitionem Dei; & erant in summo Bono, nimirum Christo. Biel.

The Evils of Punishment are not truly Evils; for they flow from the chiefest Good, even God; they lead to the chiefest Good, the enjoyment of God; and were found in the chiefest Good, even Christ Jesus.

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TO THE READER.

Christian Readers,

IT is now more than seven months, since it pleased the holy and wise God, (together with some dear and Christian friends from London,) to visit my house with the Plague; whereby he gently toucht and gave warning to my self and whole Family, (consisting then of eight souls) but called away hence only three members of it, viz. two tender babes, and one servant; besides my b loved sister, and a child of my precious friend, that man of God, Mr. G. C. (since also translated) who were of those Citizens that visited me; You

will easily believe that I can have no pleasure to rake into the ashes of the dead, nor to revive the taste of that wormwood and gall, which was then given me to drink; and yet I see no reason, but that I ought to take pleasure in the pure and holy will of God, (which alwaies proceeds by the eternal rules of Almighty love and goodness;) though the same be executed upon my dearest creature-comforts, and grate never so much upon my sweetest earthly-interest; yea, and I see all reason in the world why I should give God the glory of his Attributes and works before all the world, and endeavour that some instruction may accompany that astonishment, which from me and my house hath gone out and spread it self far and near. I will not undertake to make any Physical observations upon this unaccountable disease, nor to vindicate my self either from that great guilt that is charged upon me, as if I were a sinner above all that dwell in this Country; or from those many false and senseless aspersions, that have been cast upon my behaviour (during this Visitation) much

much like that we read of, Mat. 28. 13. *but do freely commit my ſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly, and pray with the Pſalmiſt* (Pſal. 69. 6.) Let not them that wait on thee O Lord God of Hoſts be aſhamed for my ſake; let not thoſe that ſeek thee be confounded for my ſake, O God of *Iſrael. Neither do I purpoſely undertake in this Preface to reconcile the providences of the moſt wiſe God to his promiſes, or to ſalve that ſeeming difference between the words of his mouth, and the language of his hands; between which I have only ſuſpected ſome kind of jar, but have experienc'd an excellent harmony*——In very faithfulneſs haſt thou afflicted me. *Whence ariſe all thoſe uncharitable cenſures, with which the afflicted ſoul is apt to charge both himſelf and his God too? Spring they not certainly from theſe two grand cauſes, viz. A miſapprehenſion of the nature of God, and of the nature of Good and Evil? let the ſtudious and pious Reader ſearch, and judge. If ever therefore you would be eſtabliſht in your minds in a day of affliction; (1.) Labour to*

be rightly informed concerning the nature of God. *Away with those low and gross apprehensions of God, whereby your carnal fancies do ascribe unto God such a kind of indulgence towards his Children as you bear towards yours; which indeed no way agrees to his nature. His good will towards his children is a solid, wise, and holy disposition, infinitely unlike to our humane affections.* Soli Deo competit, Amare & Sapere. (2) Labour to be rightly informed concerning the nature of good and evil. *Judge not the goodness or evilness of things by their agreeableness or disagreeableness to your flesh, palate, or carnal interest; but by the relation that they have to the supream good. The greatest prosperity in the world is no further good, than as it tends to make us partakers of God: and the greatest affliction may thus be really good also. But that by the* By. *My design is to justifie and glorifie Infinite Wisdom, Righteousness, Goodness and Holiness before all men. Oh blessed God! who maketh a seeming* Dungeon *to be indeed a* Wine-celler; *who bringeth*

eth his poor people into a Wilderneſs, on ſet purpoſe there to ſpeak comfortably to them! Be of good cheer, O my Soul! He hath taken away nothing but what he gave: and, in lieu of it, hath given thee that which ſhall never be taken away; the firſt fruits of life, inſtead of thoſe whom the firſt born of death hath devoured. But why do I ſay, devoured? Doth not that truly live at this day, which was truly lovely in thoſe darlings? Didſt thou, O my fond heart, love Beauty, Sweetneſs, Ingenuity incarnate? And canſt thou not love it ſtill in the fountain, and enjoy it in a more immediate and compendious way? Thy body indeed cannot taſte ſweetneſs in the abſtract, nor ſee beauty except it be ſubjected in matter: but canſt not thou (O my ſoul) taſte the Uncreated goodneſs and ſweetneſs except it be embodyed, and have ſome material thing to commend it to thy palate? Be aſhamed that thou being a Spirit as to thy conſtitution, art no more ſpiritual in thy affections and operations. Doſt thou with ſadneſs reflect upon thoſe ſweet Smiles, and that broken Rhetorick

Hoſ. 2. 14. Job 1. 21. Luke 10. 22.

with which thoſe Babes were wont to entertain thee? (1) Conſider duly what of real contentment thou haſt loſt in loſing thoſe. For what were thoſe things to thy real happineſs? Thou haſt loſt nothing, but what it was no ſolid pleaſure nor true felicity to enjoy; nothing but what the moſt ſenſual and brutiſh ſouls do enjoy as much as thou. (2.) Be aſhamed rather that thou didſt enjoy them in ſuch a groſs and unſpiritual manner. Art thou troubled becauſe any earthly intereſt is violated? Rather be aſhamed that thou hadſt and cheriſhedſt any ſuch intereſt.

But pardon me (Courteous Readers) this digreſſive Soliloquy; and now ſuffer me patiently, whileſt I ſpeak ſomething by way of Admiration, *ſomething by way* Obſervation, *and ſomething by way of* Exhortation.

1. *Let me call upon Men and Angels to help me in celebrating the Infinite and Almighty Grace and Goodneſs of the Eternall and bleſſed God.*

Mal. 3. 2. *Who enabled me to abide the day of his coming, to ſtand when he appeared:*

peared: and made me willing to ſuffer him to ſit as a Refiner of ſilver in my houſe!

Who carryed me above all murmurings againſt, I had almoſt ſaid, all remembrance of thoſe inſtruments that conveyed the infection to me!

Who reconciled my heart to this Diſeaſe, ſo that it ſeemed no more grievous, noyſome, or ſcandalous than any other!

Who ſubdued me to, I had almoſt ſaid, brought me in love with this paſſage of the Divine Will! I can remember, (alaſs, that I can ſay little more, but that I do remember!) how my ſoul was overpowered, yea and almoſt raviſht with the goodneſs, holineſs, and perfection of the will of God: and verily judged it my happineſs and perfection (as well as my duty) to comply cheerfully with it, and be molded into it.

Who gave me a moſt powerful and quick ſenſe of the Plague of a carnal heart, ſelf-will, and inordinate creature-loves, convincing me that thoſe were infinitely worſe than the Plague

in the flesh: so that I did more pitty, than I could be pitied by my ordinary visiters!

Who wonderfully preserved me from the assaults of the Devil, never let him loose so much as to try his strength upon my integrity, to drive me to a despondency, or to any uncharitable conclusions concerning my state!

Who enabled me to converse with his love and mercy in the midst of his chastening, to see his shining and smiling face through this dark cloud: yea, kept up clear and steady perswasions in my soul that I was beloved of him, though afflicted by him!

Psal. 31. 7. *Who* knew my soul in adversity, *visited me when I was* sick and in prison, *refreshed, strengthened, comforted my inner man in a marvellous manner and measure, and made me appear to my self*, never less shut up, than when shut up! *Oh would to God I might be never worse than when I was shut up of the Plague! The not removing of that* affli-on-frame, *I shall count a greater blessing, and a more proper mercy, than the removing of that* afflicted state.

Nemquam minus solus, quam cum solus, Scip.

Who

Who cleared up my intereſt in his Son, ſtrengthened my evidences of his love, ſatisfied and aſſured my Soul of its happy ſtate, more than at any time, more than at all times formerly! I had clearer and ſurer evidences of Divine grace in that patient, ſelf denying, ſelf-ſubmiting frame of ſpirit, than in all the duties that ever I performed: The vally of tears *brought me more ſight of my God, more inſight into my ſelf, than ever the* valley of viſions, *all duties and ordinances had done. When the* Sun of righteouſneſs *aroſe upon my ſoul, and chaſed away all the miſts and foggs of ſelf-will, and creature loves, then alſo did all black and diſmal fears, all gloomy doubtings moſt ſenſibly flee before him.*

Who ſupplyed my Family from compaſſionate friends, with all things needful for Food, Phyſick, &c. the Lord return it ſevenfold into their boſoms!

Who maintained my health in the midſt of ſickneſs, in the midſt of ſo great a death! I do not remember that either ſorrow of minde, or ſickneſs of body ever

prevailed

prevailed ſo much upon me, during three months ſeclusion, as to hinder me of my ordinary ſtudy, repaſt, devotions, or my neceſſary attendance upon my ſeveral infected rooms, and adminiſtring to the neceſſities of my ſick. Theſe enſuing Diſcourſes were then compoſed; which doth (at leaſt) argue, that (through grace) this mind was not altogether diſcompoſed, nor body neither.

Who preſerved me, and gave me not up to death! For I judge that I was perſonally viſited with the Plague, though not with the Sickneſs.

Who hath given me a ſincere and ſettled reſolution, and vehement deſire to live entirely on and to himſelf: which I account to be the only life of a Soul, and only worthy to be called a living. Grant me this prayer, O moſt bleſſed and gracious God, for the ſake of my only and dear Redeemer!

Thou O Lord God, who art witneſs, to all my thoughts, and words, and works, knoweſt that in truth and ſoberneſs I publiſh theſe things to the world, not to advance the reputation of my

own

own silly name, or to be admired of my fellow creatures, but for the glory of thy Holy Name, to beget a good liking of so gracious a Creator in all thy poor creatures, who are prejudiced against thee and thy Holy Service: and to strengthen the hearts of thy servants to a most firm and lasting adherence to thee even in the greatest extremities: that thou mayest be admired in thy Saints, and glorified for giving such power, and grace, and comfort unto men. And, oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and his wonderful works *in and* to the children of men! Mat. 9. 8. Psal. 107. 8.

2. *Suffer me to make a short observation of some few memorable Passages out of many, possibly they may be for the future, though they should not be for your present advantage; The Lord direct you to make a right application of them, according to the emergencies of life.*

First, I do thankfully record the gracious design of the holy, and wise God, in that he had secretly prepared my heart, though at that time I knew

not

not particularly for what. I remember that for ſome few weeks before, I had found a more than ordinary largeneſs and readineſs of ſoul; particularly, that I had been ſtudying the excellent myſtery, and ſucking out the ſtrengthning marrow of that famous Text, (1 John. 4. 8) God is love; *from whence I had importunately preſt upon my ſelf the reaſonableneſs of complying ſweetly, cheerfully, univerſally with the will of God; little dreaming then of the Plague, which was almoſt an hundred miles off me. Oh bleſſed and merciful God, who of old didſt make* Abraham, *and yet makeſt his and thy children to follow thee, though they know not well whither.*

Heb. 11. 8.

In the next place, I count it moſt worthy of my obſervation, (*not unworthy of your conſideration*) *that it pleaſed God to ſeize upon my Family in the beginning of harveſt, a harveſt which I had too earneſtly expected, too carefully provided for, and promiſed my ſelf too liberally from; which folly and vanity of minde, this Viſitation thus tim'd, did as clearly convince me of*

(me-

(me-thought) as if I had ſeen an hand writing upon the wall. I am aſhamed, yet I will not ſtick to confeſs before all the world (God grant it may be for the ſeaſonable and effectual warning of any!) that my vainer mind was over-pleaſantly (not to ſay eagerly) drawn out towards ſecular and worldly (however neceſſary) employments and concernments: And thus I was rebuked.

Upon examination, I find that verily I have been guilty concerning my Children. I do not remember that ever any man reproved me for immoderate loving of them, or could for any indulgence that could be by humane eyes diſcerned. But oh I ſee and feel it as a ſword at my heart, that I loved them not ſo purely, ſpiritually, and properly in God, as I ought to have done. Philoſophy will eaſily prove it to be a more tolerable vanity to dote upon a Child, than upon a Kingdom: But Chriſtian Divinity doth abundantly demonſtrate all creature-fondneſs unreaſonable and intolerable.

The next thing that I will record ſhall be, the difficult task that I found

to maintain a right humble and a right cheerful frame at the ſame time: oh how oft and how long did I labour under this difficulty! That ſenſe of ſin which was called in to promote tenderneſs of heart, being over much indulged; was ready at length to deſtroy that largeneſs and cheerfulneſs of ſoul which was ſo much my duty and intereſt to maintain: and on the other hand, the ſenſe of Divine Wiſdom, Grace, and Love in Chriſt Jeſus being called in to keep up the ſoul from ſinking, was ready to bear it up ſo high as that it almoſt forgot that it was in the waters. Beware, Chriſtians, and watch diligently, that Godly ſorrow do not ſettle into an ungodly deſpondency and inconſolable heavineſs; the ſoul not being able to bear up under its own burden; and that a holy cheerfulneſs and ſerenity do not evaporate into an unholy frothineſs and forgetfulneſs of your infirmities, the ſoul not being able to manage its own metal and motions.

I know you would willingly underſtand ſomething of the frame of my heart at that day, reſpective to my de-

parture

parture out of this world: you will beſt read my heart in the enſuing diſcourſe (upon 2 Cor. 5. 6) which I think was fetcht from thence. I ſhall therefore ſay no more as to this matter; only acquaint you with one eminent Experience relating hereunto. My minde, or fancy, or appetite (I know not well what to call it) was ſometimes enditing in me ſome deſires to live yet longer; I entred the liſts with this temptation, and when I had fairly and calmly debated the ground and reaſon of ſuch inclination, after many ſhifts and pretences it came to this; I would fain perſwade my ſelf, I was not yet holy enough; this I did immediately conſent to, knowing it to be a certain truth; But that therefore I ſhould deſire to prolong my dayes upon earth, this was a fallacious Inference. Me thought I pleaſed my ſelf a while, whilſt I could ſay, I deſired only to live to be better: But after a time I apprehended a fallacy in this pretence; for the way to be perfected in holineſs is, not living, but indeed dying. Chriſtians, if indeed your Souls be ſincerely

and

and powerfully affected towards perfect holiness, then sing not so much with David, Spare me that I may recover, &c. *as with good old* Simeon, *who having seen God in the flesh, desired to go out of the flesh, that he might see him more fully and beatifically* —— Now lettest thou thy servant depart, &c. *I cannot enlarge upon this Observation; I suppose I have hinted enough to shew those pretences of many men, viz. that they would fain live to be more fit to dye, to be, for the most part, but a kind of mockery, and self-deceit.*

Psal. 39.23

Luk. 2. 339

Lastly, (that I be not over tedious) *I do solemnly and sincerely profess before God, and Angels, and Men, that I was never so much as inclined to think hardly of God or his good and holy wayes, because of this dispensation; but did then constantly and freely proclaim to all that came to visit me, that sin, particularly self will, and sensual loves, are the worst of plagues, and holiness the only happiness of man; yea afflicted holiness infinitely to be preferred before prosperous wickedness.*

3. Suffer

3. *Suffer me, as a concluſion of this Preface, and as a reſult from all that I have ſeen and ſuffered, to commend unto you a few excellent and neceſſary duties. I have much ado to forbear being large here; but I have already tranſgreſt, therefore I will wave thoſe common Theames, of remembring your Creator betimes, of hearkening to the voice of his Word before his Rod ſpeak, of living in continual preparation for death, of repenting and renewing repentance, &c. and only commend two or three things, which ſeem to me of moſt excellent and neceſſary importance,*

——petimuſq; damuſq; viciſſim.

1. Love and enjoy all things in God. *Admire Divine* Goodneſs *in every created excellency, and taſte a Divine* Sweetneſs *in every created comfort. O how is the noble ſoul of man debaſed, pinched, confined by low and ſenſual loves, whilſt many men love the creature in* oppoſition *to the Creator, moſt men in* competition *with him; and almoſt all men in a way of* ſeparation *from him! Oh baſe and degenerate affections! Let God be All things in your eye, ſo that you*

ſhall

shall see, nor know, nor love, nor tast nothing but him in the world. Delive your selves (oh immortal souls, t whom I write) from all those low an straitning, and starving creature-loves and long and labour to be fill'd wit pure, and holy, and spiritual delights such as the Angels of God have, suc
Joh. 4. 34. *as the Son of God had, when he mad it his* meat and drink *to do the wi of his Father. But this you will fin more largely prosecuted and prest i the last of these following Discourses. Therefore,*

2. Live purely at the pleasure o God, and maintain an universal and hearty compliance with his holy and perfect will. *Believe it, you will never enjoy a firm and steady peace, til you have committed all your wills and waies to him, and wrapt up all your interests and ends in him; till your hearts be conformed to the heart of God, and your wills molded into his will. It i a difference of wills and ends, and a distinction of interests that beget all those ragings and stormings in the hearts of men against God;* Mine *and* Thine *d*

not

not only divide the world amongſt men, but divide men againſt God, Earth againſt Heaven. Take this for a certain and undoubted Aphoriſm, that the grand intereſt of a Soul is to comply with, and be one with God: *Communion of hearts, and wills, and intereſts, and ends, is that glorious fellowſhip which a creature hath with its Creator; this is indeed the intereſt and honour, the duty and dignity, yea the Heaven and happineſs of the reaſonable creature; But ſomething to this purpoſe you will find in the firſt Diſcourſe.*

3. *I beſeech you Chriſtians, be not content to ſay, you have choſen God for your chiefeſt good, but* purſue after him as ſuch, without grudging, and without ceaſing, longing to be as much one with him in a participation of divine perfections, as our created natures are capable. *Maintain a holy and ſecret driving of ſoul towards this bleſſed object continually, as a thing moves towards its center, as a ſoul ought to endeavour to accompliſh its own perfections: ſtand not gazing upon a Heaven to come, but labour to draw down all that peace, joy, love,*

love, purity, which Heaven is, into your own ſouls, by growing up into the life of God daily. Reckon that you are never in a right temper, except you be in David's Pſal. 130.6. *temper, when he waited for God more* Pſal. 119. 20. *than they that watch for the morning, when his* ſoul broke for the longing *that it had unto him at all times. I ſay not, that you ſhould prepare for death that ſeems too low, both word and thing, look and live beyond death and the grave, be lifting up your heads to diſcover the dawnings of the day of your Redemption, be laying hold upon immortality and eternal life. Something to this purpoſe you will find in the ſecond Diſcourſe, whither I refer you.*

And now accept, I pray you, theſe poor labours, which, for the glory of my God, I make publick, that ſince, with Hezekiah, 2King 20. 8. *I may not* go up to the Houſe of the Lord, *to declare the goodneſs of the Lord; yet I may leave ſome monument of it in* writing, *as he did,* when he had been ſick, Iſa. 38. 9. and was recovered of his ſickneſs. *I will add no more, but intreat all ſerious and devout Readers to magnifie the holy Name of God on my behalf,*

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adding thereunto their earneſt prayers to God for me, viz. *that the ſame fire that burnt up the* ſtanding Corn *of my creature comforts, may alſo happily conſume all the* ſtubble *of my creature-delights and loves, that my God would give me a* name better than of Sons and of Daughters, *the bleſſed* fruits *of his* Spirit *inſtead of* the beloved fruits of the womb, *that I may for ever live under the moſt powerful influences of this diſpenſation, and that the glory of the Lord may never depart out of the Temple of my Soul, as it departed out of the Temple made with hands. Now to the God of all grace and peace, be all praiſe and glory! To him I commit you all, and reſt* Isa. 56. 5.

Feb. 27. 1665. Your friend and ſervant in Chriſt Jeſus,

S. S.

Quod ſani *quæſivimus*, hoc *invenimus* ægri:
Quæ nequiit vallis *riſûs*, tulit hæc *lacrymarum*.

THE

THe ſame Author hath alſo another little Treatiſe extant, entituled, *Immanuel*, Or, *A diſcovery of true Religion, as it imports a living principle in the minds of men:* Grounded upon Chriſts Diſcourſe with the Samaritaneſs, *Joh.* 4. 14. being the latter Clauſe of the *Voice crying in a Wilderneſs*; or a Continuation of *The Angelical Life*, partly compoſed at the ſame time.

A Welcome TO THE PLAGUE.

AMOS 4. 12.

— *Prepare to meet thy God O* Iſrael.

IN this Sermon of the Prophet, the Lord reckons up the many fearful Plagues wherewith from time to time he had aſſayed to reclaim this perverſe people, the ten Tribes of *Iſrael*, beginning at the ſixth verſe: But ſtill concludes the relation, with a doleful *Epiphonema*, *yet have ye not returned unto me.* It is not my buſi-

 neſs

neſs to enquire into the ſeveral Plagues, either the clear meaning of them, or the particular time when they took place or ended; nor into the impenitence and ſtubbornneſs of the people; though many uſeful things might be obſerved from hence. But in the concluſion, becauſe none of theſe judgments had prevailed upon them, God reſolves to trouble himſelf with them no longer, but to deſtroy them utterly. All that he had done to them in the Land, had not prevailed; therefore now he will caſt them and carry them out of the Land, by the overflowing ſcourge of an *Aſſyrian* captivity: This threatning he denounces in the ſecond and third verſes, *I will take you away with hooks, and your poſterity with fiſh-hooks*, &c. And after he had reckoned up the many calamities whereby he had ſought to bring them to repentance, but they repented not, and ſo had demonſtrated the equitableneſs of this final judgment, he re-aſſumes the ſame threatning, and perſiſts in his former reſolution *verſ.* 12. *Therefore thus will I do unto*

thee

thee; And then adds, *Because I will do thus unto thee, therefore prepare to meet thy God O* Israel.

Which words may either be understood *Ironically*, by way of derision of all their vain confidences and refuges; and then the *Doctrine* is, *That there is no standing before, nor striving against, nor flying from God when he comes to execute vengeance*; Which is an excellent truth, and of great use. Or else the words may be understood *seriously* by way of exhortation. The doubt seems to arise from the ambiguous meaning of the word [*Meet.*] The word קרה signifies both to meet in a *hostile* manner; to assault, invade or grapple with, as a man meets his enemy; so it is used concerning *David* addressing himself to fight with *Goliah*, *1 Sam.* 17. 48. *He ran to meet the Philistin*; and also to meet in a *friendly*, amicable manner, by way of communication, collocution, salutation or converse. So it is used concerning *Isaac* going to meet *Rebekah*, *Gen.* 24. 65. and concerning God's meeting of *Balaam* to speak with him, and impart

his mind to him, *Numb.* 23. 4. If we take the word in the first sense, then it is spoken by way of Irony or derision, and so the meaning of the words is contained in the Proposition that I have laid down. If we take the words in the latter sense, then it is spoken seriously by way of exhortation, and so the meaning of them may be wrapt up into this,

Doct. *That it is the duty of Gods people to study a right behaviour towards him, and to converse with him aright in the way of his judgments, in the time of their afflictions.* And in this sense I shall take them, and prosecute them. Besides that general, unalterable godly frame and behaviour which Gods people owe to him as a standing duty and indispensible homage, there are some more especial behaviours and tempers which they owe to him in special cases, and are duties *pro hic & nunc*, as the season requireth. Particularly, there are some special behaviours required at our hands in the time of our affliction: And these both, 1. Towards our selves, as self-examination, self-judging,

newing of repentance, &c. 2. Towards men, meekneſs, compaſſion, inſtructing, warning, comforting, &c. 3. Towards God, as we ſhall ſee anon. An afflicted condition doth call for ſome more eſpecial tempers and behaviours towards our ſelves and others: But theſe I am not to ſpeak unto from this Text. It is the ſouls meeting God, behaviour towards him, converſing with him, that my Text leads me to treat of, and I ſhall not vary from it. In handling of which poſition, I ſhall take this Method. 1. Premiſe ſome things needful to be known, concerning the ſouls converſing with God: For I ſhall retain the word [*converſing*] throughout my diſcourſe, as being a ſingle, yet a large and ſignificant word. 2. Shew what it is for a ſoul to converſe with God, and how it comes to converſe with him. 3 Prove the doctrine, That it is our duty to converſe with God in the way of his judgments. 4. Shew particularly, how we are to converſe with God in the time of afflictions. 5. Apply it.

1. I ſhall premiſe ſome things needful to be known, that tend to clear up

my way to the following diſcourſe.

1. I premiſe, That *it is the great duty of man to converſe with God.* I have read that it was a common precept that the Jewiſh Doctors were wont to give to the people, that they ſhould ſingle out ſome one Commandment, and exerciſe themſelves very diligently in the obſervation of it, that therein they might make God their friend, and make him a kind of amends for the breach of many others. I doubt it is a Rule that too many Profeſſors live by, who not having the genuine and generous ſpirit of true Religion, do parcel out their obedience into ſome little ſhreds of homage and devotion; and inſtead of conſecrating their whole lives to God, do content themſelves with ſome circumſtantial and light obedience, and think themſelves people of great attainments, if they do but ſeverely tye up themſelves to hearing twice a week, and pray r twice a day, and a few other acts of more ſolemn Worſhip. Certainly this is a penurious and needy ſpirit, much unlike the generous, ample and free-born

ſpirit

ſpirit of true Religion. The duty, the whole duty, the conſtant duty of man is to converſe with God; commended in *Enoch* by the name of *walking with God*, Gen. 5. 22. Where you may obſerve of him, that he did not only *ſet out* fairly with God, or *take a turn* or two with him, but he *walked with him* three hundred years together. The ſame God calls for from *Abraham*, under the ſame name, *Gen.* 17. 1. Walk before me, and be perfect. But it is not only the command of God that makes this a duty: If there had been no expreſs commandment concerning it, yet were it the duty of every man, neceſſarily flowing from his relation of a reaſonable creature. As man is a creature, ſo he muſt needs *live upon God*; and as a reaſonable creature, ſo he ought to *live with him and unto him*. Therefore hath God given unto man a noble rational ſoul, not only that he might talk and work, manage the creatures, and converſe with the world; but that he might converſe with the God of the world; that Infinite, bleſſed and glorious Being. This is the very end

of mans Creation, as man, as a reasonable creature; This was the end of his being created in the Image of God; and when he was fallen from this Image, this was the end of his Redemption by Christ Jesus; that Heaven and Earth might be reconciled, and those that were far off might be brought nigh: Sin is a sinking of the soul down to self and the creature; and redemption from sin is nothing else but a recovery of the soul into a state of favour and fellowship with God. So that whatever is expressed by *Faith* and *Repentance*, is contained in this one word, *Converse with God.* It is the great, the necessary, and as I may say, the natural duty of the Reasonable Soul.

2. *It is the highest priviledge of man.* The *Prerogative* of man above the beasts is his *Reason*; and the *Glory* of reason is, that it is *capable* of knowing, loving, enjoying, and conversing with the Supreme and Infinite Good. The priviledge of Reason is not (as too many think) that it is capable of understanding Arts and Sciences: that it is capable of climbing up into the na-

ture

ture and courſe of the Heavens, and diving into the ſecret depths of the Earth, and Sea, and the creatures therein contained; but in converſing with the Infinite and Glorious God. How miſerably do vulgar ſouls abuſe this noble faculty, who exerciſe it only in diſcourſing, numbring, and ordering the poor concernments of the world and the body! Yea, certainly thoſe wiſe men, thoſe *Scribes*, thoſe *Diſputers of this world*, as the Apoſtle calls them, who cry up this faculty, and glory ſo much in it, and yet do not exerciſe it about that high and eternal Being, do not converſe with God in pure affections, and God-like diſpoſitions and converſations, but expend thoſe vaſt treaſures of reaſon upon ſecrets in Nature, ſecrets in Art, ſecrets in State, or any other created Being, do enthrall their own ſouls, which they ſay are ſo free-born, and captivate and confine that noble principle, which they themſelves do ſo much magnifie; For 'tis certainly the great and only ſhame and reproach of an immortal ſoul: And indeed theſe men, though

they put their ſouls to ſomewhat a more noble drudgery, yet are really no more happy than the vulgar ſort, who ſpend the ſtrength of their ſouls about eating and drinking, plowing or ſowing, or keeping of Cattle. What difference, I pray you, in point of true happineſs is there, between Boys playing with Pins and Points, and old mens hugging of Baggs and Lands? The nobleſt Sciences, The greateſt Commands, the moſt enriching Traffiques are as very toys in compariſon of true happineſs, as the poor dunghil-poſſeſſions of vulgar men: And the wife, the rich, the learned, the honourable of the world, that take up with an employment in this world, and with a happineſs in themſelves, or in any creature, do as much diſgrace their own ſouls, and as truly live below their own faculties; as he doth that knows no higher good than food and rayment; no higher employment than to toil all his dayes in a ditch. For indeed, as to all things but converſing with God, man ſeems to be but equal, perhaps inferiour to the beaſts that periſh. Doth man eat, drink,

drink, ſleep, work? ſo do they. Doth man find any ſenſual pleaſure, which the beaſts do not ſenſate as well as he? Nay the Gormandizing Emperour envied the Cranes long neck; and others have envied the more able and permanent luſts of the bruit beaſts, becauſe themſelves have been inferiour to them therein, and have enjoyed leſs ſenſual pleaſure than they. If any glory in their knowledge of natural and political things; I could inſtance in the ſtrong memory, great ſagacity, quick fancy, wonderful perceptions of many beaſts, and their ſtrange knowledge of many ſecrets which they never learnt by Books, no nor gathered gradually by Obſervations. And as for mans communications of his notions by words and phraſes, I doubt not to affirm, that there is ſomething like to be found in Beaſts and Birds: yea, that very beauty and flower of ſound, even Muſick (which ſome men magnifie ſo much) is more fairly and ſweetly uttered by the ſilly Bird that ſits ſolitary upon a bough, than by the Quiriſters of the Popes Cathedral.

Cathedral. What ſolid Prerogative worth naming remains to man above his fellow-creatures, but his converſing with God, which we call *Religion*, and is indeed Reaſon rectified, ſanctified, exalted, and boyled up into its pure and primitive perfection! Inſo much that I have ſometimes thought, that I never heard a more reproachful word ſpoken concerning degenerate man, neither do I think that any thing can be ſpoken of him more ſhametul and diſhonourable, than what the Apoſtle ſaith of the Heathen, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. — *without God in the world.* By converſing with God in the world, is *man* truly raiſed *above the beaſts*, and *the godly man above all other men.* Nay, hereby is the godly ſoul advanced to the dignity and glory of the Holy Angels, or at leaſt to a parity of happineſs: For it is this that is their perfection and glory, as we find it deſcribed in *Mat.* 18. 10. — *They always behold the face of God.* And therefore our bleſſed Saviour doth affirm, that the Saints in the Reſurrection, who ſhall be raiſed above all

creature-

creature-communion, to live upon God ſingly and entirely, ſhall be ἰσάγγελοι, *equal to the Angels of God*, Luk. 20.36? In a word, this is the moſt real Heaven, ſetting aſide all circumſtances of place, *&c.* the perfect and proper happineſs of a ſoul, *to ſee God*, Mat 5. 8, *to be like unto him*, 1 John 3. 2. to converſe with the Father by the Son, as our Saviour hath told us, who beſt knew it, John 17. 3. *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* By this it is that God dwells in the ſoul, and the ſoul in God (as we ſhall ſee hereafter) and the Kingdom of Heaven doth really enter into every Believer.

3. *The natural man is utterly unwilling and unable to converſe with God.* An *earthly Mountain* may as ſoon riſe up to Heaven by its own power and good will, as an *earthly mind*: And ſuch minds are all natural and unregenerate. Sin, as I hinted before, is a falling from God, a ſinking of the ſoul into ſelf, whether *ſenſual* ſelf, or *ſpiritual* ſelf, and a ſhrivelling of it up

up into the creature, and the ſinful ſoul is alwaies (like a ſhadow) moving upon the ſurface of the Earth, and higher it cannot get, *Rom.* 8. 5. Would you know what is the principal object of a natural mans admiration, inclination, and ambition? The Pſalmiſt will tell you, it is ſome created *good*, *Pſal.* 4. 6, 7. Will you know what is the diſpoſition of the natural man towards the ſupream and uncreated good; the Apoſtle will tell you it is *Ignorance* and *Enmity*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God.* This high duty of converſing with God in a right manner is beſides the temper of the wicked man: never any ſuch man did perform it. It is a contradiction: A wicked man converſing with God, is, as if one ſhould ſay, An ungodly man that is godly. But that's not all; This duty is not only out of the *hands* of a wicked man, but out of his *reach* too, —— *Neither can be know him*, ſaith the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians*, and again to the *Romans*, —— *Neither can be be ſubject to him. Can two walk together, except*

cept they be agreed? ſaith the Prophet. Can man *walk* with God, converſe with God, except he be reconciled to him? And what agreement, but by a Mediator? What Mediator between God and man but Chriſt Jeſus, who is a Mediator as the Logicians call a *medium participationis*, who is God man? In a word, ſome converſe with one thing in the world, and ſome with another, as I noted before; but all converſe principally and mainly with the creature, that are not regenerated by Grace, reconciled by Chriſt.

4. *It is the duty of man in all ages of life, at all times, and in all places and conditions, to converſe with God.* It is a neceſſary, natural, certain, conſtant duty, ſpringing up out of the very nature and natural will of God, and out of the very nature and relation and capacity of the reaſonable ſoul, binding *ſemper* and *ad ſemper*, as the School-men ſpeak, and admitting of no *diſpenſation* nor *diminution*. There is no time wherein it is not a duty, or wherein it is leſs a duty than at another time: however, we are apt

apt to give to our ſelves many relaxations from it. The firſt *fruits*, nay, the very early *buds* of the tender ſoul, and of the ſpringing faculties; theſe are due to God, and ought to be dedicated to him, *Eccleſ.* 12. 1. *Remember now thy Creator in the daies of thy youth.* Manhood is not allowed ſo to attend unto cares and exploits, nor old age to pains and griefs, as to neglect converſe with God: But whether young men build or plant, fight or ſtudy, or work, or marry, or manage the affairs of the houſe or of the field, all ſhould be undertaken and carryed on in a way of converſe and fellowſhip with God: or whether old men ſit, and muſe, and meditate, or ly under the pains and grievances of decrepit age, ſtill it ought to be in the Lord. Neither doth this duty admit of interruption, no more than of ceſſation: There is no diſpenſation given us from this duty, as in no *age*, ſo in no *hour* of our life. As we cannot live a moment *out of God*, ſo neither ought we to live a moment *without God* in the world. We ought continually to endeavour to walk

walk in ſubſervience to, and converſe with God, yea and as far as may be in a feeling converſe with him too. Holy *David* witneſſeth of himſelf that the fear of God was continually before his eyes, and that he did continually converſe with God; for ſo thoſe words may be underſtood, *Pſal* 73. 23. *I am continually with thee.* The like is recorded of many other Saints both in the Old and New Teſtaments; concerning whom one may well ſay as the Queen of *Sheba* concerning the ſervants of *Solomon*, and with much better reaſon (1 *Kings* 10. 8.) *Happy are theſe thy ſervants* (O Lord) *which ſtand continually before thee!* Neither is it the duty of ſome few men, that have the greateſt knowledge or the moſt leiſure. For it ſprings up out of the relation of a creature, and out of the very nature, of the rational ſoule, ſo that no ſoul of man is exempted from it, however many ignorant and profane perſons live rather in a profeſſed independance upon God. Neither is it a duty only upon ſuppoſition of leiſure and freedom from worldly

buſineſs.

buſineſs, as ſome other things are, but is equally incumbent upon Prince and Peaſant, upon him that ſits in his cloſet, and upon him that ploughs in the field; yea they that go down unto the Sea in ſhips, ought to go up unto heaven in their hearts; and not only to converſe with the clouds (which they often do,) but above them too. A hand full of earth, and a heart full of heaven may well ſtand together; For as this duty juſtles out no honeſt buſineſs, ſo neither ſhould it ſelf be juſtled out by any. And as this high and excellent duty agrees to all ages and times and perſons, ſo it agrees to all conditions too: poor men do think that rich men may well do it, and rich men think that poor men had need to do it: proſperity thinks it hath better things to mind than a God, and adverſity knows it hath worſe things, but it muſt mind them: plenty is too full to entertain him, and poverty hath enough to do to bear up under its own burden: learning knows how, but will not; ignorance ſays it would, but knows not how; but notwithſtanding

ſtanding all this ſhuffling, the obligation to this duty ceaſes not: None ſo high as to be above it, none ſo mean as to be below it; For rich and poor, high and low, learned and unlearned, Prince and Peaſant, though they are divided amongſt themſelves by punctilioes and leſſer differences, yet they are united in one Univerſal Being, meet in one and the ſame center, agree in the common capacity of reaſonable creatures. As Religion hath an intereſt and a concernment in the whole of the converſation, (according to that of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 3. 20. *Our converſation is in heaven*) ſo alſo hath it a room in the converſation of every man in every capacity: No Relation, Condition, Action, Change is exempted from the powerful influence thereof; ſo the Apoſtle deſcribes himſelf, by his *living in all good conſcience before God* all along, *Act.* 23. 1. and by his exerciſing himſelf in this thing, *to have always a Conſcience void of offence towards God and towards men*, Act. 24. 16.

Now the fifth ſtep in order, would be, that *It is more eſpecially the duty of*

Gods

Gods people to ſtudy to converſe with him aright in the way of his judgments, which is the Doctrine it ſelf, which I muſt not come to confirm, till I have ſhewed according to my promiſe in the ſecond place, *what it is for the ſoul to converſe with God, and how it comes to converſe with him.*

Not to name thoſe too low and improper notions that men ordinarily have of this High and ſpiritual matter, converſing with God, to ſpeak properly of it, is *a complex act of the ſoul, whereby it entertains God into it ſelf and renders it ſelf back again to him*; receives impreſſions from him, and gives up it ſelf again to him; is firſt filled with him, and then empties it ſelf into him. You may conceive of it after the ſimilitude of a Plant, that is influenc't by the benign beams of the Sun; and in thoſe beams ſpreads it ſelf, and in the virtue and power of them grows up towards Heaven: or after the ſimilitude of a River, that is continually filled with the Ocean, and is continually emptying it ſelf into the ſame,

πάντοτε

πάντοτε πληρῦται ἡ πάντοτε κενοῦι. This ſeems to be our Saviours elegant alluſion, *Joh.* 4. 14. where he compares a divine and godly principle in the ſoul, to a *well of water* ſpringing out from God, and continually boyling and bubling up towards him——*ſpringing up into eternal life.* Or you may conceive of it after the ſimilitude of a Glaſs, which receives the image of him that looks into it, and reflects the ſelf-ſame image that it receives. For indeed the brightneſs and beauty of holineſs wherewith a godly ſoul doth ſhine as a light in the world, is nothing but a reflection of that light and brightneſs wherewith the Father of light ſhineth into it. And ſo the beſt of men have nothing of their own to glory in; for they behold God, but it is in his own light; they love him with a love which he hath ſhed abroad in their hearts; they are therefore like him, becauſe he hath ſtampt his own image upon them: and ſo they muſt needs acknowledge concerning all their acts of love, and communion, and delight; as *David* did in another caſe,

caſe, *Of thine own we offer unto thee.* This is indeed the true and noble converſe and communion with God, wherein the life of a godly man is infinitely advanced above the life of all other men, and indeed doth nearly reſemble the life of Angels: Their life is deſcribed in the holy Scriptures, by a *ſeeing of God*, a *beholding of him face to face*; which we muſt not underſtand of a naked idle ſpeculation, but of a real aſſimilation ariſing from the divine impreſſions made upon them; a beholding of him ſo as to be changed into his image. And ſuch is a godly mans life, ſpiritual life, his life of converſe with God, conſiſting in a participation of God, and of his Grace, and a holy reciprocation or reflection of affections to him; which are indeed two diſtinct acts, though orginally ſpringing from the ſame Fountain: for the love wherewith the ſoul loves God, is it ſelf an efflux from him. For by loving us, he inſpires love into us; and by influences from God, we become God-like. But this converſe with God is not only by the impreſſion

impreſſions of goodneſs from God, and the reflections of love and delight towards him; but is alſo ſeen in the various acts of the Soul, according to the various impreſſions which God maketh upon the Soul, and ſuitable to the various occaſions of life; ſo we converſe with God by acts of fear, reverence, joy, confidence, ſelf-reſignation, and the like.

Now, becauſe we are in the body, and ſo cannnot converſe with God ſo purely, ſpiritually and immediately, as the Angels in Heaven do, therefore it hath pleaſed God to appoint unto man ways and means of converſing with him, wherein he hath promiſed to communicate himſelf to the Soul, and ſo to draw forth reciprocal acts of communion, acts of love, fear, reverence, confidence, reſignation, dependance, and delight out of the ſame ſoul towards himſelf. Now theſe ways or means may be reduced to three heads: *Duties*, *Ordinances*, and *Providences*; though indeed the two firſt might be contracted into one. Firſt, I will ſpeak a word or two of

Ordinances,

Ordinances, such as the Word and Sacraments; for I shall name no more but these two. The Preaching of the Word is a way in which God doth usually meet the soul, to communicate *Life*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. *Light*, *Psal.* 19. 8. *Warmth*, *Luke* 23. 32. *Growth*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. And the soul doth answer these impressions, *as in the water face answereth face*, by the acts of *Faith*, *Love*, *Joy*, *Meekness*, and holy *Resolution*. So also the administration of the Sacraments is a way wherein God meeteth the soul, and communicateth his *Love*, *Sweetness*, *Fulness*, *Goodness*, *Strength*, and *Vigour* to the soul; and it reflects upon him in the acts of holy *complacency* and *delight*, *chearfulness*, *thankfulness* and *dependance*.

Secondly *Duties*, these are also ways of converse with God; such as *Confession*, *Petition*, *Thanksgiving*, *Conference*, *Singing*, *Meditation*, *Observation*. In all which God impresseth something of himself upon the soul, and draws answerable affections of the soul unto himself, as might appear in the particular explication of them; but that

that would be too much a digreſſion. Only I will here note by the way, the miſtake of many low ſpirited Chriſtians, who know no other converſe with God, than the bare performance of theſe things; this they count the very top ſtone of a Chriſtians perfections, the very flower of the ſpiritual life. But alas, this is a groſs miſtake! There is ſure ſomething more ſweet, ſavoury, ſatisfactory in the ſpiritual life, than the dry duty: there is marrow in the bone, or elſe a holy ſoul could not covet it with ſo much fervour. Converſe with God in duties, is a ſpiritual, ſavoury, filling enjoyment, diſtinct from the duties themſelves: This muſt needs be, except we will allow to wicked and hypocrital men the ſame daintics, that the moſt ſanctified ſouls do feed upon; and ſay, That the childrens bread is common to the Dogs, as well as them. The ſoul doth not converſe with God in duties barely when it prays, or meditates, for even Godly ſouls themſelves do many times find little converſe with God in theſe, *viz.* when

he ſuſpends the influences of his grace
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with earthly objects, or otherwi
indiſpoſed and ſhut up againſt him
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dark places thereof become filled wi
his divine light, and the empty plac
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thereof are raviſhed and revived wi
the powerful inſinuations of his A
mighty Grace; when G d draws, a
the ſoul runs; he puts in his finger
the hole of the dore, and the v
bowels of the ſoul are moved for hi

s it is described, *Cant.* 5. 4. Then oth the soul converse with God in editation and prayer, when the Spirit f God moves upon the face of the aters, when he kisses it with the isses of his mouth; and the shaking oul finds it self marvelously setled, he doubting soul established, the fro- en heart thawed, the benumm'd affe- tions warmed, the scant and con- racted capacity of it enlarged and wonderfully widened, and its slow and laggish motions quickened into a live- y and cheerful compliance with, and ursuit of the supream and self-sufficient good; when the soul finds its gs to run after that glorious object hich is presented to it, lists up its ands to lay hold upon the strength, he fulness, the faithfulness, the Christ f God; and bearing up it self upon he wings of faith and love, flies out o seek its rest and happiness; and no onger envies the birds of the Altar, or it self enters into the *Holy* of *Ho- ies*, and th[illegible] the *arms* of its Me- iator, throws it self into the very *ast* of God. In a word, and that

ſhall be the Word of God, then doth a ſoul converſe with God in duties when with *open face beholding the glory of God*, it doth not only admire it, but it ſelf is *changed into the ſame image from glory to glory*, *i. e.* from grace to grace. 2 *Cor.* 3. *ult.*

Thirdly, *Providences*: Theſe are another way wherein the ſoul converſes with God. Now by Providences we mean in general, *the whole work of God in governing the world, and all things therein.* And ſo indeed a religious enlarged ſoul, a mind freed from particular pinching Cares, low and ſelfiſh ends, converſes with God in beholding and obſerving Gods ſetled courſe of governing the world. The whole Heavens, Earth and Sea, and the admirable order kept up in them, do teach the knowledge of God, and draw up the contemplative ſoul into an obſervation and admiration of him in them; and the pious ſoul longs to find ſome impreſſions made upon it ſelf by all theſe, and to be affected with God therein: It is not content with a bare ſpeculation, but its me-

ditatio

ditation of God in these is *sweet* to it, as *Davids* were, *Psal.* 104. 34. Particularly, Gods *Providence towards mankind*, as it doth most lively expresse his infinite love, justice and wisdom, so we ought to converse with him therein, and in all the changes of any kind that befal man in the world, that befal all the Kingdoms of the world, the four great Monarchies of it, and all other subordinate Dominions; more especially in all the mutations that befal the Church of God in the world, and all men of all sects and sorts therein, but most especially our selves. Labour to converse with that infinite mind, wisdom and understanding that ordains and orders all the changes that befal your selves. Now our conversing with God in the several changes that befal us in the world, is in general by endeavouring to serve the Providence of God in every change. The Providence of God *serves it self* even upon wicked men, and upon all creatures that do least understand it; but a godly man only knows how to *serve the Providence of God* in the

things that befal him: He hath no private selfish interest of his own, but counts it his interest cheerfully and faithfully to serve the will of God, to be what God would have him be, to be without that which God would have him to want, and to do what God would have him do. Every wicked soul in the world sets up some trade for himself, and drives on some particular self-interest distinct from God: But a godly soul counts it his greatest honour and happiness to be nothing in himself, nor for himself, but is wholly at the beck of his Creator, and looking upon all his interest as being bound up in God, is solicitous for nothing else but to serve the will of God in his generation: So the life of holy *David* is described, *Acts* 13. 36. David *in his generation having served the will of God*, *i. e.* the Providence of God, say the *Dutch Annotat.* translating the words in this order. A good man eying nothing but the great and blessed God in the world, and knowing that he was not made for himself, but for a higher good, is only ambitious to be

subservient

ſub'ervient to that Infinite and Soveraign Being; herein imitating his Bleſſed Saviour, who lived not to do his own will, but the will of him that ſent him, *Joh.* 6. 36. and again, to ſeek the glory of him that ſent him; *John.* 7. 18. In a word, he looks upon himſelf, not as in himſelf, but in God, and labours to become ὅλως τῦ τινος, wholly Gods, and to live in the world only an inſtrument in the hands of him that worketh all things according to the counſel of his own will. That in general, for the converſing with God in all kind of changes in general. Now theſe changes are reduced to two heads, Proſperity and Adverſity. In the firſt of theſe it is our duty to converſe with God, and not with the creature-comforts which we do enjoy from him, as one might ſhew at large. But I am to ſpeak of the latter, and to ſhew how we ought to converſe with God in that: But firſt I muſt demonſtrate, that it is our duty to do it; which was the third thing I promiſed, viz. *To ſhew that it is the duty of Gods people, to ſtudy to converſe with him*

aright in the way of his Judgments in a time of affliction. And here, I hope, I need not be at pains to prove by Scripture, that besides the general business of a Christians life, some particular and more especial behaviours are required of him in an afflicted state, all will grant it sure: Besides, by that time I shall have declared *what* they are, I shall not need to prove *that* they are. Therefore for the present I shall content my self to give in three or four Reasons of it, and so pass on. It is especially the duty of Gods people to study to converse with him aright in the time of afflictions.

1. Because *then especially it is hard to do it*: We are then very apt to be taken off from it, therefore we should then especially labour to pursue it, and perform it: We are then in eminent danger to be taken off from it; and that by these means.

1. *Our senses do set us on work to converse with outward means*, which, whilst we attend upon too eagerly we neglect and forget God. This might appear by an induction of particular

ticular afflictions; but that would be too long. I will only instance in one or two for explication. The sickness and painedness of the body, calls out the mind to seek after, and converse with Physitians; bodily wants call us to seek after bodily supplies, and so all kind of distresses call out the soul to seek creature-relief. Call upon the sick and languishing Patient to call upon, and hang upon divine help, to converse with God: Alas, he hath enough to do to attend upon his pains and pangs; tell him of ease, of recovery and he can hearken to you, for that's the news that he longs to hear. Call upon the poor pined begger, to seek relief of God, to converse with him; Alas, he finds such a faintness in his limbs, such a gnawing of hunger, such a restless appetite within himself, that he can groan out nothing, but *Oh that one would give me bread to eat!* In a word, the soul is more naturally addicted to mind its body to which it is joyned, than the God that joyned it to that body. Hence you may observe two things by the way, viz. 1. The

reason why so few persons repent in time of sickness; the sense of sickness drowns the sense of sin. 2. The reason why so few poor people who are evermore conflicting with the necessities of the body, do not at all mind the concernments of their souls: The exigencies and straits of the body, do cry louder in their hearts than all the words and works of God. So that as health is the best time for repentance, so it seemeth that the best way to *teach* the poor, is to *relieve* them.

2. *The corruptions of the heart are then most apt to make war against Heaven.* This is the opinion of him who knows the temper of man too well, *Job* 1. 11. *Put forth thine hand against him, and he will curse thee to thy face.* And I am perswaded that the Devil acts much by this observation; which makes him endeavour all he can to make many good men poor, thinking thereby to make them less good; though the wise and merciful God do wonderfully prevent him. For indeed the soul is so naturally tender of the body, that its loth God himself should touch it

it; if he do, it is ready to fret and ſtorm, and fly in his face. Converſe with God! ſaith the wicked King *Why this evil is from the Lord; what ſhould I wait upon the Lord any longer!* 2 King. 6. 33. There are many corruptions of the ſoul that are moſt ready to clamour againſt God in a time of affliction, as *Fear*, *Anger*, *Unbelief*, yea, and ſinful *Self Love* and *Creature-love*, an affection that can never be taught to converſe with God, yet will go crying after him, when he takes away any darling from it, as *Phaltiel* went crying after his Wife; or rather, crying againſt him, as *Micha* cryed againſt the men of *Dan*, ſaing, *Ye have taken away my Gods, and are gone away, and what have I more?* Judg. 18. 24.

3. *Temptations do then come ſtrongeſt from without.* Then it is the Devils time to play his game: What, put up this reproach! what, will you ſit down with this loſs! up and revenge thy ſelf. He that knows ſo well the temper of mans heart ſo ready *to curſe God when he touches him*, Job 2. 5. will

will not fail *to touch* the heart, and tempt it *to curse him* indeed, *Job* 2. 9.— *Curse God and dye.*

The second Reason why we ought especially to study to converse with God in the time of afflictions, is because *that it a time wherein we are most apt to think our selves excused from this duty*, as if it were allowed us in our extremity to forget God, and mind our selves only. And that not only in respect of those bodily straits and distresses, which I named under the last head, but in respect of our own passions. When the afflicting hand of God is upon us, pressing and grieving of us, and taking our beloved comforts from us, we are apt to indulge our own private and selfish passions, care, fear, sorrow, complainings, &c. Yea, to think we are in some sense allowed to indulge them. How willingly do we suffer our selves, to be drawn into a converse with our selves, to be contracted as it were into our selves, and suffer our selves to be carryed down the stream of our own passions, which at other times we should

should think it were our duty to resist! Even as the heart in naturals draws home to it in a time of danger, the blood that was dispersed abroad in the body, as it were to defend it self: so the heart in morals gathers home its powers and affections which were formerly bestowed here and there, to employ them all about it self in a time of sore affliction. And we are apt to think our selves excusable too in so doing; So that if God himself should ask a distressed soul as he did *Jonah*, *Dost thou well to be careful, fearful, sorrowful, querulous*, because of these afflictions, losses, distresses that are upon thee? it would go nigh to give him the same answer, I *do well* to be sorrowful, yea, and to refuse to be comforted. There seems to be allowed us some natural affections in case of extream affliction; which, how far they are lawful, I will not now dispute. But sure I am, that if such be allowed us, they must not be wild extravagants, wandring without the bounds of Religion, and Conscience, as if God had laid the reins upon the neck

of

of the ſoul, and given it leave to indulge it ſelf in what paſſions it would for a certain time, as the Daughter of *Jeptha* was allowed to go whither ſhe would, wailing upon the mountains for two months. We are never allowed any paſſions or affections ſure, that do not comply with the will of God, and conſiſt with our ſubmiſſion thereunto. But whatever they are, I find, that under the pretence of thoſe, ſome men are apt to be carried unto ſtrange inordinacies, and commit many paſſionate outrages; and indeed the beſt of men are too prone to ſuſpend and interrupt that lively and feeling converſe with God, which they ought to maintain even when they ſmart moſt.

3. *Becauſe then it a time when there is more eſpecial uſe for, and need of ſuch converſe with God.* And that (1) *To give reſt to the ſoul.* In proſperity men forget God, and yet make a ſhift to find ſome kind of reſt in their pleaſures, friends, employments, ſome take comfort in their cups and companions

companions; and indeed all are apt to fancy a contentment in creature-enjoyments. But in a time of great affliction, all these are gone, or at least have no savour in them; and where shall the weary soul find rest then? Then there's no shew of rest but in God alone. When all other props fail, then either catch hold of God or fall. There is now nothing left to give any settlement or contentment to the soul but God alone: And in him there is ease to the sick, rest to the weary, settlement to the shaking, contentment to the troubled Christian. Therefore converse with God in the day of greatest affliction; which is the same counsel in effect with that our Saviour *Matth.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* (2.) There is need of it, *to give relief to the body also.*

And so conversing with God in a right manner, is the best policy, the surest way to recovery, and relief. See what a speedy cure there is in it *Psal.* 34. 5. *They looked unto him and*

I *and*

and were lightned, and their faces were not ashamed; This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. In vain is conversing with Friends, Physicians, Counsellors: in vain is all creature-converse without this: No rest to the soul, no ease to the body in a time of affliction, without converse with God? so that a man in affliction estranged from God, straggling off from God, is altogether miserable. In a word, separate a soul from God, and in prosperity his enjoyments are low, and in adversity the want of them is very bitter: so that there is good reason why a Christian should study to converse with God in the way of his Judgements. —— But the great Art is to know how. This therefore I now come to in the

Fourth place, to shew particularly, *how we are to converse with God in afflictions.* Now there are two waies of explaining this.

1. By shewing with what Attributes of God we are to converse.

2. By what acts of the soul. But

In

I ſhall bring both theſe into one.

1. We ought to converſe with the *abſolute and unlimited Soveraignty* of God whereby he, as a free and ſupream Agent, doth what he will, and none can ſay unto him, *What doſt thou?* Dan. 4. 35. This *Job* often eyes and owns: Particularly, *Job* 9. 12. *He taketh away, none can hinder him, and who can ſay unto him What doſt thou?* This we muſt alſo eye often, and own heartily. This we may well argue from Gods creating of us: He that made us thus without any *conſtraint*, can he not may he not make us otherwiſe, and alter us without *reſtraint*? So *Job* argues, *Chap.* 1. 21. We may alſo argue it from the ſubordinate Soveraignty, and inferiour ſupremacy of men, Even a Monarch among men doth whatſoever he pleaſeth, and who may ſay unto him, What doſt thou? *Eccleſ.* 8. 3, 4. Yea, a very *Centurion* hath a kind of Soveraignty in ohis ſphere, over as many as are under him, he ſaith unto one man *Go, and he goeth*; and to another, *Do this, and he doth*

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it, Mat. 8. 9. And ſhall we not then acknowledge a Soveraign Power, and independant abſolute Authority in the great and bleſſed God, over the whole Creation, the workmanſhip of his own hands? So the good Centurion argues; and infers, in the place laſt quoted. Nay, as the Apoſtle ſaith in one place, *We have Fathers of our fleſh* who uſe us at their pleaſure, and we do not gainſay their Authority, we do not ſay to our Father, *What begetteſt thou?* nor to our Mother, *What haſt thou brought forth?* Iſa. 45. 10. Nay if theſe ſimilitudes will not teach you, I will ſay to you, as God to the Prophet, *ariſe go down to the Potters houſe*, there I will cauſe you to learn this leſſon: He maketh or marreth his veſſels of Clay, as oft as he pleaſeth; And, are not ye in the hand of the Lord, as the Clay is in the hand of the Potter? *Jer.* 18 6. I ſpeak the more to this, in as much as I find, that however men give God good words and confeſs his dominion over them and theirs, yet when it comes to it,

that

that he touches them in any of their darling comforts, they are ready to clamour againſt him in their hearts, as if he did them ſome wrong; if not to curſe him to his face. Certainly there is ſome Atheiſtical opinion of propriety, that in ſome degree or other is apt to ſteal into the moſt devout minds: And ſure I am, we do not only barely offend, but we do our ſelves much hurt; we wound our own peace; we ſhake the ſetledneſs of our own hearts; we put our ſelves into briars: In a word, we both leſſen our creature-comforts, and multiply our griefs, and aggravate our ſorrows, by calling things our own: If we had not taken them to be our own, it would not have troubled us to part with them.

Be ſure therefore to eye and own the abſolute and unlimited Soveraignty of God: but that's not all; it is not enough to believe it: we muſt converſe with it otherwiſe than by thinking of it, or aſſenting to it. Then do we converſe with the Soveraignty of God.

1. *When*

1. *When the powerful sense of it doth silence quarrelling, yea murmurings, yea even disputings in the soul.* We may indeed modestly contend with men concerning their dealings with us; the *Potsheard* may *strive with the Potsheard of the earth*; but it must not say to the *Potter*, Why hast thou made me thus? A pacate and quiet frame of heart, is a real conversing with the Soveraignty of God. So did *Aaron* when he held his peace, *Levit.* 10. 3. and *Job*, when he *attributed nothing unseemly to God*, Job 1. *ult.*

2. *When the sense of it doth suppress self-will.* This is an unruly lust in the soul, γιγαντώδης ψυχὴ, a Giant-like spirit warring against Heaven, and breeding bate continually. This is that which maintains a *Meum* and *Tuum* even with God himself, that sets up interests (as the Jews set up Princes, *Hosea* 8. 4.) but not by God, yea indeed in opposition to him. This is the seditious party in the soul, that is alwaies crying out, We will not have this man to rule over us: And when that darling interest

which

which this proud rival hath ſet up, is touched of God, and ſmitten and blaſted from Heaven, it is ready to fret and ſtorm, yea, and to think it hath reaſon to be angry. If this Son of the bond-woman were caſt out, *Abraham*'s Family would be all of a piece, all in order and at reſt. If this undiſciplin'd and perverſe ſpirit were quite baniſhed; Oh what a calm day would it be in the ſoul! what fair and ſweet correſpondence would there be between God and his creature! for certainly this is the *Jonah* that raiſes the ſtorm, and makes the great deeps of the ſoul that they cannot reſt, but do perpetually roll and toſs, yea and caſt out mire and dirt continually. But alas, I doubt this ſpirit is not quite laid, no not in the moſt ſpiritual man: the beſt of men are ready to nouriſh and hatch up ſome darling, ſome private intereſt or other of their own, diſtinct from God, and the grand intereſt of their ſouls; which God himſelf muſt not touch; ſome Gourd or other that the cold wind muſt not blow upon. He is a bleſſed man indeed, who doth

doth ſo underſtand that he lives and moves in God alone; and is ſo overpowered with the ſenſe of the infinite goodneſs and holineſs of God, and the abſolute perfection of his divine will, as that he reckons it his greateſt perfection to be nothing in himſelf, nor have nothing of his own diſtinct from God, but only ſtudies to be great in God, to be filled with God, to live to him, and for him; to enjoy all things as in and under him; who counts it his *only intereſt* to quit all *ſelf-intereſt*, and particular ends, and to be freely at the diſpoſal of the higheſt mind, conformable to the higheſt good, cheerfully compliant with the uncreated will. *Potiphar* had ſo committed all to *Joſeph*, in the ſenſe of his great faithfulneſs, that he knew not ought he had, *ſave the bread that he did eat*, Gen. 39. 6. But this ſimilitude is too low: A godly ſoul ſhou'd commit all its intereſt, its life and livelihood, and all to God in the ſenſe of his Soveraignty, and not know ought that he hath, no not his own life, but deſpiſe it in compariſon of uncreated life; as

Job

Job ſpeaks, *Job* 9. 21. Methinks the Soveraignty of God ſpeaks ſuch language to the ſoul and in it, as *Eli* to *Samuel*, *My Son, hide nothing from me, keep nothing back of all that thou haſt*, and the pious ſoul ſhould not, with fooliſh *Rachel*, conceal any ſelfiſh intereſt, ſo as not to be willing to part with it, when its Soveraign Lord and Father comes to ſearch the tent; but (with alluſion to *Amos* 6. 10.) when God comes to ferret out all ſelf-intereſts, and ſhall ask, *Is there any ſuch yet with thee?* ſhould be able to anſwer boldly, *No*, there is none. Bleſſed is the man that is in ſuch a caſe; bleſſed is the man whoſe only intereſt it is to ſerve the will of the Lord! Well, improve the infinite Soveraignty of God to this end, and work it upon, and into your own hearts, that all ſelf-will may ſtoop to it: And let the main intereſt of your ſouls, be ſo planted and eſtabliſhed in your ſouls, that no other intereſt may be able to grow by it: Charm your own ſelf-will with ſuch ſevere reproofs, as this is; Either *deny thy ſelf*,

O my ſoul, or *deny thy ſelf to be a creature*: either be wholly at Gods command, or call him not thy Soveraign.

3. *When the ſenſe of it doth beget Reverence in the ſoul towards God.* We ought not only to be ſubject to the Rod of God, but even to reverence him when he correcteth with it: and ſo not only to *accept* of the Rod, but to *kiſs* it too. And ſurely if the Fathers of our fleſh correct us; and *we give them Reverence*, Heb. 12. 9. much more ought we to reverence the Soveraign Father both of fleſh and ſpirit. This is a devout act of the ſoul, whereby it looks up and adores the Infinite and Soveraign Majeſty, and thinks equitable and honourable thoughts of him, even when he is in the way of his Judgments. And theſe are the proper acts of a ſoul converſing with Gods Soveraignty in the time of afflictions. When we are ſilent before him, ſubject unto him, and reverencing of him; then do we really and truly converſe with him as our Almighty and abſolute Soveraign. But

Gods

Gods Authority and Prerogative, though it may silence, will scarce satisfie: such a corrupt and rebellious pass are our natures grown to. Therefore,

2. Converse with the *Perfect and infinite Righteousness of God* in the time of afflictions; that divine perfection whereby he renders to every man what is just and due, and no more. This we are to eye and own, and sincerely to acknowledge, even in the time of our greatest extremity, after the example of *Daniel*, chap. 9. 14. *The Lord our God is righteous in all his works*; and of the godly *Levites*, Neh. 9. 33. *Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, thou hast done right.* Argue with *Abraham*, Gen. 18. 25. *Shall not the Judg of all the Earth do right?* Can Righteousness it self erre in Judgment? Shall the *Timber* say unto the *Rule*, Why hast thou measured me thus; or to the Line, thou art crooked? *Are not my waies equal? saith the Lord*, Ezek. 18. 25. Are not the Lords waies equal? let your souls say

too. Be ye firmly perſwaded of the infinite and incorruptible Righteouſneſs and Equity of God, but that's not all; we do not then converſe with the Righteouſneſs of God, when we do believe it, or acknowledge it: a very *Pharaoh* may be brought to make ſuch a confeſſion, *Exod. 9. 27. The Lord is Righteous, and I and my people are wicked.* But then do we converſe with the Righteouſneſs of God, in general, *when the ſenſe of it doth give a rational ſatisfaction to the ſoul.* And indeed, whereas the Sovereignty of God is enough to ſilence, yet his Righteouſneſs had need to be called in to adminiſter ſatisfaction: The former is ſufficient to *ſtop the mouth*; but there is need of the latter to *ſettle the heart*, And indeed methinks it is a heart-ſetling conſideration. For, how can the intereſt of the creature be better ſecured than in the hands of a righteous God? Where can we venture all we have, better than in ſuch a certain and ſteady bottom? How can we better truſt our ſelves, than on ſuch firm and even

ground?

ground? We will truſt our ſelves far with an upright and righteous man: and if we hear of the miſcarriage of any intereſt of ours at any time, it doth mightily calm and ſatisfie our hearts, if we are aſſured that it was in the hands of a juſt and upright perſon: Much more rational and ſteady ſatisfaction may the Infinite Righteouſneſs of God adminiſter even in the time of the greateſt affliction, if it be duly wrought into the heart. But more particularly,

1. *The powerful ſenſe of the Righteouſneſs of God ſhould make us ſenſible and ſerious.* It becomes us ſeriouſly to ponder, duly to weigh, and in good earneſt to lay to heart, all that is done to us by a righteous God. We uſe ſlightly to paſs by, and ſlightly to eſteem the words or actions of vain man: But it is not for nothing that the righteous God afflicts any man, in any meaſure, at any time. The voice of God, though it be not alwaies *articulate*, yet it is alwaies *ſignificant*. *Will a Lion roar for nothing?* Surely every action of the righteous

God hath a meaning in it. A hair falls not from our head, nor a Sparrow to the ground without him; Much leſs ſure do greater changes befall us without him. And in all things he is infinitely righteous. Oh how doth this call upon us to ſenſibleneſs and ſerioufneſs! How ought all the powers of the ſoul to be awakened to attention, when the righteous God utters his dreadful voice! and the whole frame of the heart and life to be compoſed under his heavy hand! Now if ever, one would *ſay of Laughter, It is mad*: one would reckon trifling to be a kind of prophaneneſs and judge that fooliſh jeſtings do almoſt border upon blaſphemy, formerly not convenient, now not lawful. For indeed a vain, frothy, light, trifling ſpirit, in the day of affliction, is in a ſenſe a blaſpheming of the Righteouſneſs of God. As a conſequent of this,

2. *It ſhould put us upon ſelf-examination.* Nature it ſelf hath taught the Heatheniſh Mariners to enquire where the fault was in a ſtorm, *Jonah* 1. 7. Much

more

more may the knowledge of Gods Infinite Righteouſneſs teach us: ſo may the holy Word too, that word in *Lam.* 3. 40. *Let us ſearch and try our waies, &c.* And many others. Now do the faculties of the godly ſoul being awakened, begin to caſt lots upon themſelves, to find out the guilty party: And certainly God hath a great hand in ordering theſe lots; he doth ordinarily *ſhew unto man his ſin*, even by the verdict of his own heart. Conſcience, I mean, is Gods Vicegerent in the ſoul; and though it's true, this Judg is oft-times corrupted and bribed, or at leaſt over-ruled in proſperity; yet God inſtructeth it to ſpeak good ſenſe, and to ſpeak out, and ſpeak the truth in the time of affliction. I believe they hit the nail upon the head, who cryed out one to another, *Verily we are guilty concerning our Brother*, Gen. 42. 21. Another cryes, Verily I am guilty concerning my Maſter, concerning my people; guilty concerning my Wife, concerning my Children, concerning my Eſtate, my Time, my Talents; and it may be all true. I believe

the Heathen was in the right, who lookt upon his hands and feet, and cryed out, *Judg. 1. 7. As I have done, ſo God hath requited me*; and the Babyloniſh Monarch harpt upon a right ſtring after he was come to his right wits again, *Dan 4. ult.*— *Thoſe that walk in pride, he is able to abaſe.* God hath not given to our faculties any infalibility indeed, but he inables them to make good gueſſes; and I am verily perſwaded, doth many times lay the hand upon the right ſore; and order this ſecret Lottery from Heaven: So that that faculty, or that frame, or that action which ſtands convicted in the Court of Conſcience, is ſeldom held guiltleſs in the Court of Heaven.

3. *It ſhould work us to Humiliation and Reformation; an heart broken, and a converſation healed of his breaches.* By Humiliation, I mean, a heart broken purely, properly, and ſpiritually for ſin. I do not mean by it, an heart broken for loſſes and afflictions, and bowing down it ſelf heavily under the burden of its diſtreſſes; no,

nor

nor an heart broken for ſin, as viewing it only in the calamitous effects, and bitter fruits of it? which I doubt is the Humiliation of moſt. Many may ſay concerning their Humiliation, (to uſe the Prophets words in a different ſenſe, *Zach.* 13. 6.) *Theſe are the wounds with which I was wounded in the houſe of my friends*, by the loſs of my friends, the loſs of my health, the loſs of my goods; theſe tears that you ſee, theſe groans that you hear, are nothing but the ſcarr which the ſoar hath left behind it, and the wales which the Rod hath made. I doubt our very ſorrow for ſin, in a time of affliction, admits of a mixture of carnal ſelf and paſſion, and ſo of ſin too. But I mean, a pure, ſpiritual, proper ſorrow and hatred of ſin; which I know may be broached by ſharp afflictions, and have vent given to it by piercing the veſſel; but that is not the proper cauſe and ground of it. *Moſes* in his joy, had an eye to the *recompence of reward*, *Heb.* 11. 26. And ſo a Chriſtian in his ſorrow may have reſpect to the *recompence of his ſin*, I mean,

his afflictions; but it is not primarily and principally caused by these; For though these dreadful showers from Heaven should cease, yet the stream of his eyes, or at least the fountain of his heart would not cease issuing forth bitter waters. Though the Righteousness of God do serve to *give vent* to godly sorrow, yet it is the goodness and holiness of God that *gives it*. Do we sorrow for sin, because it spoiled us of our comforts, stript us of our ornaments? Then sure we think there is something in the world worse than sin, for which we should bewail it, and hate it; and so consequently, that there is something beter than God, for which we should love him. Alas, how apt are we to run into a practical blasphemy before we be aware! In a word then to decide this controversie, Our afflictions, losses, distresses in the world, may possibly be as a *Bucket* to draw up this water of godly sorrow; but they must not be the Cistern to *receive and hold it*. Serious and spiritual Humiliation is a real conversing with the Righteousness of God. To

meet

meet God, indeed to *fall down before him*; and to converſe with him, is to lie down under him The truth of which temper is beſt evidenced by that excellent Commentaror, *the life of a Chriſtian*: This doth beſt declare the nature and interpret the meaning of heart-Humiliation. He that breaks off his ſins doth beſt make it appear that his heart is broken for them. If you would know whether there have been Rain in the night, look upon the ground and that will diſcover. Oh my friends, if the duſt be layed; if all earthly joys, contentments, pleaſures, concernments, be layed, you may conclude your ſorrow was a ſhower ſent into your ſouls from Heaven.

If you ſee a Boy both ſobbing and minding his Book, you may conclude he hath ſome right ſenſe of his Maſters ſeverity. *Converſion to God*, is the moſt proper and real *converſing with him* in the way of his Judgements: ſo he himſelf interprets in that complaint made, *Iſa.* 9. 13. *The people turneth not to him that ſmiteth them*, &c. That which happeneth to *Moſes* when

he had been in the Mount with God, *Exod.* 34. 29. ſhould alſo be the condition of every good *Iſraelite*, when he hath been with God in the valley, the *vale of tears*, and afflicted ſtate; his face ſhould ſhine, his converſation ſhould witneſs that he hath been with God; *the ſmell of this fire* ſhould paſs upon his garments, his whole outward man. The ſpirit of mourning ſhould be demonſtrated by the ſpirit of burning. If God from Heaven ſet fire on *the ſtanding Corn* of our *wordly comforts*, we muſt anſwer him from within, and ſet fire on the *ſtubble* of our *worldly luſts*, and corruptions. Let me change our Saviours words therefore a little, *Mat.* 6. 18. and exhort you earneſtly; thou Chriſtian, when thou faſteſt, when thou humbleſt thy ſoul for ſin, *waſh thy face* alſo, cleanſe thy outward converſation from all ſinfull pollution, that thou mayeſt appear to be humbled indeed. And this ſhall be accounted as a true and real converſing with the Righteouſneſs of God in the time of affliction.

3. *Converse with the Faithfulness of God.* This attribute of God hath respect to his promises; and therefore it may be you will think strange that I should speak of this in a discourse of afflictions, as not having place there at all. Every one will readily acknowledge that Gods Soveraignty and Righteousness do clear'y appear in his Judgements; but how his Faithfulness can be exercised therein, they see not. What, faithfull in punishing, in plaguing, in visiting, in afflicting, distressing his creature, how can that be; Many will be ready to think rather, that God is not faithfull at such a time, when he denyes what he had promised to give, takes away what he had promised to continue; when he plagues *David* every morning, when he had promised him that the *Plague should not come nigh his dwelling*; when he brings *Abijah* to the grave, whom he had promised that his dayes should be *long upon the Land*; and *Job* to the dunghill, to whom all the promises were made both of the life that now is, and of that

which is to come. Is this faithfulneſs? Doth God fulfill his promiſes by fruſtrating them? Notwithſtanding all this, it ſeems that the faithfulneſs of God hath place in the afflictions of his people: For ſo ſaith *David* expreſly, *Pſal.* 119. 75. *I know that in faithfulneſs thou haſt afflicted me*: if indeed faithfulneſs be taken properly in that place: Neither indeed need it ſeem ſo ſtrange as ſome men make it: for God hath promiſed his covenant-people, to viſit their iniquity with a Rod, *Pſal.* 89. 32. *The Rod of a man*, a fatherly chaſtiſement, as it is explained, 2 *Sam.* 7. 14. where this ſeems to be made a branch of the Covenant, and is underſtood by many as a promiſe. But if that be not a plain promiſe, I am ſure there is one in *Pſal.* 84. 11. *No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*: And if no good thing, then no correction neither; for that is often good and profitable for the people of God in this world for many excellent ends; which (conſidering the nature of man) cannot well be accompliſhed without

it; as might appear in many particulars; but it is not needful to run out into them. God will take more care of his own people, than of the rest of the world; and will rather correct them, than not reduce them. It is their main happiness that he takes care for, and he will in kindness take out of the way whatever hinders it, and give whatever may promote it. Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts: he judges otherwise of health, riches, liberty, friends, &c. than we do. We are apt to measure God by our selves, and our own affections, which is the ground of our mistake in this business. We mind the things that please our flesh, our senses, our appetite, our fancy; but God minds the things that concern our souls, and their true happiness. The Saints are much dearer to God, and much more beloved of him, than they are to themselves; and therefore he will not give them what's sweet, but what's meet; he will give them what makes for their real and eternal happiness, whether they would have it or no. He loves them with

with a ſtrong and powerful love, and will not deny them any thing that is truly good for them, though they *cry out under it*; nor allow them any thing that is really hurtful, though they *cry after it*. So will a wiſe Father upon Earth do by his children, to the beſt of his skill & power; much more will God then, *qui pluſquam patrium amorem gerit in ſuos*, whoſe bowels are infinitely larger & ſtronger than thoſe of a Father. Now then, labour to converſe with the faithfulneſs of God in the time of afflictions, which is by ſtudying the Covenant and the promiſes of it, and your preſent condition, and comparing them together, and obſerving how conſonant and agreeable they are, each interpreting other. As alſo by perſwading your hearts of the conſiſtency of afflictions with divine love and favour; and by ſtudying to reconcile the hand and heart of God together. But eſpecially converſe with it practically, by a holy *eſtabliſhment* and ſettlement of heart under all afflictions. For, whereas afflictions in themſelves are apt to beget a fearfulneſs, de-

ſpondency, or at leaſt fluctuation in the ſoul, the lively ſenſe of Gods Faithfulneſs in inflicting them, will ſettle and ſuſtain it: It is a firm and conſiſtent thing, upon which the ſhaking ſoul may ſettle ſafely, and center it ſelf boldly.

4. *Converſe with the Holineſs and unſpotted Purity of God.* He is angry and ſins not; he corrects for ſin, without ſin. *Fury is not in me, ſaith the Lord*, Iſa. 27. 4. There is no paſſionate malicious temper in the pure and holy God; no revengfull appetite to feed upon the blood of his creature. He is of purer eyes than to behold the leaſt iniquity; and of a purer nature, than any way to miſcarry in any of his dealings; or diſpenſations. Converſe then with this Infinite Holineſs of God: Keep up pure, equitable, honourable thoughts of him in your hearts. Take heed of fancying to your ſelves a God guilty of paſſion or partiality, or carried away with ſuch weak and mixed affections as we our ſelves are. But more practically, converſe with

Gods

Gods Holineſs in the time of afflictions, by laying even little ſins greatly to heart: little ſins, compared with Infinite Holineſs and Purity, ought to be matter of great and ſerious ſorrow to a ſenſible ſoul. Again take heed of the leaſt miſcarriages under affliction, of departing from God in the leaſt. This I know is the great duty and care of every tender-hearted Chriſtian at all times. But I conceive we ought more eſpecially to preſs it upon our hearts in the time of affliction, becauſe we are then moſt apt to indulge ſome kind of humane paſſions, which we call natural affections; as if we had a licence to care, and fear, and grieve, and complain, not only in an extraordinary, but even in an irregular manner. Oh let the ſenſe of Gods Infinite Purity, and perfect Holineſs, check and awe thoſe very natural affections, be they what they will, if they offer to exceed their bounds, and overflow their banks. But this I touche upon before under another head, amongſt the Reaſons of the Doctrine. Therefore

5. Converſe

5. *Converse with the Almighty Power of God.* That God is Infinite and Almighty in Power, I need not undertake to demonstrate. No man hath read a leaf in Scripture, nor indeed turned over one leaf in the book of the creatures, that hath not learnt this. I need not sure turn you to any particular mighty work of God: They that instance in his letting loose the virtues of the creatures, in the case of the universal deluge, or binding up of their influences, as in the case of the three captive Jews, *Daniel* and *Jonah*, when he kept the fire from burning, and forbade the Lions to eate one, and the fish to digest another Prophet whom he had eaten, do make but a poor guess at Almightiness, but a faint essay to describe it. The Creation of the least creature out of nothing, is an higher argument of Divine Power, than the command of the greatest that is already created. Eye God duly in the notion of a Creator; yea, of a Creator of your own souls and bodies, and you have enough to fill you with everlasting admiration, as *David* was

was filled, *Psal.* 139. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* But it is not enough to eye and acknowledge, or admire; we must yet do more, if we will rightly converse with the Almightiness of God, *viz.* by the Acts of *Reverence* and *Dependance.*

1. *Reverence that Almighty and glorious God in your hearts,* who can bring *quidlibet ex quolibet,* any thing out of any thing, yea, out of nothing; yea any thing to nothing in a moment. Reverence that power of God; that can pour contempt upon Princes; that can bring *Job* the greatest of all the men of the East, to lye in the Ashes, and make his Bed in the Dunghill; that can send home *Naomi* empty, who went out full and flourishing. Hath he done so by you, debased you when you were high, tumbled you down from the clouds, and rolled you in the dust, emptied you when you were full, withered you when you were fresh and flourishing? Let not God lose the glory of his Almighty Power; reverence that glorious hand of God.

2. Rest upon the same Almighty God

God who can alſo bring up the ſame *Job* from the dunghil, and ſet him with Princes, and fill empty *Naomi* with a famous off-ſpring, throwing into her lap one of the Anceſtors of the *Meſſiah*, according to the fleſh. The ſame Power that cauſed your Sun to go down at mid-day, when you leaſt *ſuſpected*, can alſo cauſe it to riſe at midnight, when you leaſt *hope*. Dwell not upon creature probabilities or improbabilities: but liſt up thy ſelf believing ſoul, and be aſſured, that God can do what he will, and he will do what is good for them that love him, according to the dictates of unſearchable wiſdom and goodneſs. Thou that art rolled in the duſt, yet ariſe and roll thy ſelf upon thoſe Almighty Arms that brought thee thither, and are able to advance thee; As I have ſeen a child thrown by his Father off, and thrown down to the ground in a ſeeming diſpleaſure, yet clinging to the ſame hand, and will not let it go, till at length he riſe up again by it: a fit emblem of a child of God, whom this heavenly Father ſeems as if he had caſt off. The

wound-

wounding hand of God is apt to amaze indeed, and to beget consternation and astonishment. But remember, the same hand that wounds, can also heal; he that breaks us, can also make up all our breaches: let this beget confidence and dependance. God never wounds deeper, than that he can easily bind up the wound again; never throws his people so low, as that they should be out of his reach. Take heed therefore of unseemly despondencies; cast not away your confidence, which shall have a recompence, if ye maintain it: A recompence, I say; for that God that can recover the setting Sun, and exalt it in its beauty and brightness, and doth so every morning; that can cloath the forlorn and naked trees with leaves, and fruits; that can recover the verdure of the withering grass, and doth so every year; he can also cause light to arise to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, *Isa.* 9. 2.

H: that could give unto *Amaziah* much more than that which he parted with

with at his command, 2 *Chron.* 25. 9. that could turn again the captivity of *Job*, and give him double for what he had taken from him. *Job ult.* 10, he can surely make his people *glad according to the daies wherein he hath afflicted them, and the years wherein they have seen evil*, Psal. 90. 15. He can recompence and restore to his penitent people the fruits which the Locusts and the Caterpillars have consumed, according to his promise, *Joel* 2. 25. He can recompence to his people the comforts of health and liberty, which sickness hath consumed, the comforts of friends and relations, which the grave hath devoured. He that hath made the *Springs dry*, (*Jer.* 51. 36) can as easily make *the parching ground to become a pool*, and *the thirsty land, springs of water*. Isa. 35. 7. as you find both elegantly joyned together, *Psal.* 107. 33, 35. *He turneth water springs into dry grounds, & sic vicissim.* Say not therefore with the captive Jews, *Ezek.* 37. 11. *Our bones are dryed, and our hope is lost*, &c. For God can cause even those *dry bones to live*. Say not with

with that low-ſpirited Courtier; 2 *King.* 7. 19. *If the Lord ſhould make windows in Heaven*, might ſuch plenty be in *Samaria*? For he did accompliſh it, and yet not rain it from Heaven neither. But ſay with *Job* rather, *Though he kill me, yet will I truſt in him*, *Job* 13. 15. And with the three Worthies, *Our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us out of thine hand, O King*, 3. 17. So, he is able to deliver us out of thine hand, O Enemy, O Priſon, O Sickneſs, yea out of thine hand, O grave. If we deſpond, and be dejected both in mind and body at the ſame time, then is our condition indeed ſad and ſhameſull: Nay, we do more reproach God by ſuch a temper in our affliction, than he reproacheth us in afflicting us. Make it appear, Chriſtians, that though God hath *caſt you down*, yet you do believe that he hath not *caſt you off*; and that you although you be ſorely *ſhaken by him*, yet are not *ſhaken off from him*. Thus you ſhall glorifie the Almighty Power of God in the day of your Viſitation.

6. *Converſe*

6. *Converse with the Infinite and unsearchable.* Wisdom *of God*: especially with the Wisdom of God in reference to his Judgements, and our afflictions. He is infinitely wise in reference to our afflictions. For, 1. *He knows what and what manner, and what measure of correction we stand in need of.* 2. *When and how best to deliver us.* 3. *How to make the best use of all for our good.*

First, *He knows what, and what manner, and what measure of correction we stand in need of.* He is that wise Physician, that knows what humour is most predominant in the souls of his servants, and what is the most proper Medicine to purge it out: where the most corrupt blood is settled, and at what vein to let it out. He is infinitely knowing of the various tempers and distempers of his servants, and can apply himself suitably to them all. And as to the measure and degree, he is also infinitely wise, and exact. He doth weigh out the afflictions of his people to a grain for quantity, and measure them to a day and hour for duration. He did not miss of his time

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no not one day in four hundred and thirty years, *Exod.* 12. 41. So many years of bondage were determined upon the people, and after those years were expired, the very next day, the hosts of the Lord went up out of *Egypt*. And as for measure, he observes a certain proportion, as you may see in that full Text, *Isa.* 28. 27, 28. As the Husbandman uses differing waies of purging and cleansing different sorts of grain, beating the *Fitches with a Staff*, and *Cummin with a Rod*, because they are a weaker sort of grain, and will not endure hard usage; but *bruising the Bread Corn*, because threshing will not suffice, and he is loth to break it all to pieces with turning his Cart-wheels upon it. An elegant similitude, whereby God insinuateth his different waies of correcting his people, and observing a suitableness to their strength and temper, when less would not do, and more would overdo. He must correct so far as to bruise; but will be sure not to break and spoil. He that saith unto the proud waves of the swelling Sea,

Hither

Hitherto ſhall ye come, and no further. Job 38. 11. hath the ſame command over theſe Metaphorical waves, thoſe floods of affliction, which he lets looſe upon his people, and they cannot go an inch further than he hath appointed: He ſaith, Hitherto ſhall this Sickneſs, this Mortality, this Perſecution go, and no further: and even theſe *ſtorms*, and this *Sea obey him.* Now we converſe with this Inſtance of Divine Wiſdom, not only when we obſerve it, and acknowledge it; but,

1. *When it begets in us a friendly and charitable temper towards ſecond cauſes*: When we are at peace with the whole Creation, even with enemies themſelves, and in perfect charity with thoſe very Plagues and Sickneſſes that do arreſt us: rather admiring and delighting in their ſubſerviency to God, than at all maligning their ſevere influences upon us. A good man is ſo much in love with the pure, and holy, and perfect will of God, that he deſires alſo to fall in love with, at leaſt he is at peace with every thing that executes it, that ſerves the

will of his heavenly Father. He ſees no reaſon in the world to fall out with, and fret againſt any man, or any thing that is a means to afflict him; but views them all as inſtruments in the hand of God, readily ſerving his will, and doing his pleaſure, and under this notion is charitably affected towards them all. Obſerve a little, and admire, how *David* was reconciled to the Rod, becauſe it was in the hand of his Father, and ſeems to kiſs it for the relation that it had to the Divine Will, 2 *Sam.* 16. 11. *Let him alone, and let him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him.* This gracious ſoul is ſo wonderfully in love with the Will of God, that he could almoſt find in his heart to be reconciled to ſin it ſelf, if it do accompliſh it, and to be friends with the *wrath of man*, if it work the *righteouſneſs of God.* And if *David* can be ſo charitably affected towards a curſing *Shimei*, viewing him as an inſtrument in the hand of God; methinks we may be almoſt in love with any thing under that notion, and much rather ſay concerning a poor harmleſs

harmleſs Sickneſs, Let it alone, ſo let it put us to pain, for God hath ſent it. To this ſenſe may a devout ſoul draw the words of his Saviour concerning the Woman in *Mat.* 26. 10. *Why trouble ye the Woman? ſhe hath wrought a good work upon me*: Why do ye interrupt and diſturb this diſeaſe? Why do ye fret 'gainſt this Perſecutor? Why do ye repine at this Priſon? it executes the will of my God upon me. What though theſe men pour out their venom in ſuch abundance? What though this diſeaſe ſpend its influences upon my body ſo plentifully? There's *no waſte* in all this; there's need of juſt ſo much; God doth not laviſh out his Arrows in vain, nor ſhoot at rovers, as *Jonathan* did, who couzened his Lad, making him believe he ſhot at a mark when he ſhot at none. A *ſoul* overpowred with the ſenſe of Gods Infinite Wiſdom in appointing, meaſuring, timing all afflictions, will eaſily be reconciled to a poor harmleſs creature, which is ſet on, and taken off at his pleaſure.

2. *When it begets in us a holy*

Acquiescency and resting in God, which is opposed to a larger and disorderly hastning towards deliverance. Then do we indeed own and honour the skill of our Chirurgion, when we do quietly suffer the corrosive plaisters to lie on, and do not offer to pluck them off, notwithstanding the smart they put us to. And surely he that believeth the Infinite Wisdom of God, who knows what, and what manner and measure of correction we stand in need of, will not *make haste* to be delivered from under his hand; but composeth himself quietly; as young *Samuel* laid himself down, and when he was called, answered chearfully, *Speak Lord for thy servant heareth.*

A soul sensible of Gods Infinite Wisdom in this particular, argues thus, Whom am I poor worm, shallow creature, that I should contend with Infinite Wisdom about the time or manner of my being in the world? Why did not I also undertake to appoint him the time and place of my being born? Shall I say it is too much, when Infinite Wisdom thinks it

it is not enough? Ceaſe wrangling ſoul, and be at reſt, for the Lord deals wiſely with thee. Such a ſoul ſo converſing with the all-wiſe God, dares freely refer all to him, venture all with him; if he ſmite him on *the one cheek*, he *dares turn to him the other*; if he take away his Coat, he dares offer him his Cloak alſo; if he take away his liberty, he dares truſt him with his life too, if he ſmite him in ſome of his comforts, he dares turn to him the reſt alſo; for he knows that Infinite Wiſdom cannot err in Judgement, nor miſcarry in his diſpenſations.

Secondly, *God knoweth when, and how beſt to deliver us.* This neceſſarily follows upon the former. To him all times, and all things paſt, preſent, and to come, are equally preſent: In one ſingle act of underſtanding, he doth wonderfully comprehend both cauſes and events, ſickneſſes and cures, afflictions and deliverances. Let the Atheiſtical world cry; Theſe are they that are forſaken, whom no man careth for; there is no hope for them in their

God, as their manner is to blaſpheme. Still the promiſe ſtands unrepealed in both Teſtaments, *I will never leave you, nor forſake you:* though the caſe be never ſo extreme and deſperate, ſtill the Apoſtles words hold good, 2 *Pet.* 2 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.* If all paſſiges be blockt up, he will rather make a gap in the Sea, than his people ſhall not eſcape, *Exod.* 14. And this way and time of Gods delivering, is the moſt excellent, ſuitable, and certain, as might abundantly appear in many particulars; But that would be a digreſſion. In the general, be aſſured that Gods way is the beſt way of deliverance, and his time is alſo the beſt time. He that ſits as a *Refiner of Silver*, knows how, and when to take out the metal, that it be purified, and not hurt. Here I might enter into a large diſcourſe, and ſhew you how the judgment of man is ordinarily deceived, and his expectations diſappointed, which he had built upon creature probabilities; when in the mean time the purpoſe

of

of God takes place in a farr better and more comfortable deliverance of his servants. But it may suffice, to have hinted it only.

Our duty is to converse with this Instance of Divine Wisdom by the exercises of *Patience* and *Hope*. If God seem to tarry long, yet wait patiently for his appearance, for he will appear in the most acceptable time, and *in the end ye shall consider it*, and acknowledge it. Take heed of limiting the Holy One of *Israel*, as that murmuring generation did, *Psal.* 78. 41. Take heed of fixing of your deliverance to such or such a train and series of causes which you have laid in your own heads, and of engaging God to act by your Method: If God be a wise Agent, it's fit he should be a free Agent too. Bear up Christian soul, faint not when thou art rebuked of him; *Cast thy burthen upon the Lord*, and he will in due time, find out a way either of lessening it, or removing it. *You have heard of the patience of* Job, *and you have seen the end of the Lord*, James 5. 11. Be you patient, and you shall see it too; a

better end than ever you could have accompliſht by your own art or induſtry. In the mean time, cheriſh in your hearts a lively hope of an happy iſſue: For your lives and comforts are all hid in him, in whom alſo are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge. As the conſideration of Infinite Wiſdome, in knowing how, and when beſt to deliver us, may ſettle our hearts that they do not riſe up as a foam upon the waters through impatience; ſo it may bear up our hearts, that they do not ſink within us, as a ſtone in the waters through deſperation.

Thirdly, *God knoweth how to make the beſt uſe of all for our good.* I ſay, of all, both of the affliction, the manner and meaſure of it, of his delay and of the ſeaſon which he chuſes to redeem us in. He can make *Paul*'s impriſonment turn to his advantage, *Phil.* 1. 19. *Job*'s captivity to redound to his far greater ſtate. *Job ult.* *Joſeph*'s baniſhment, to make him great; and *Manaſſe*'s, to make him good. This is a large Theme, and therefore I dare not

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rifle into it particularly. Take all in one word from the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8.28. *All things do work together for good to them that love God.* What ever the premiſes be, the only wiſe God knows how to draw a happy concluſion from them. Get a firm belief of this radicated in your hearts, and converſe with the Wiſdom of God in this inſtance of it by the great Grace of *Self-reſignation.* The Soveraignty of God may well work us into a reſignation of our intereſts, and comforts, and concernments to him; But this Infinite Wiſdom of God ought in reaſon to work us into a reſignation even of our very wills unto him. Oh this debaſing of ſelf-will, this ſelf-reſignation is a noble and ingenuous act of a pious ſoul (for ſo I dare call him in whom it is found) whereby it honours God greatly in all that comes upon it. A godly ſoul conſidering it ſelf ignorant of many things, burdened with many corruptions, and clogg'd with an animal body, ſenſes, appetite, fancy, which are alwaies calling for things inconvenient, if not unlawful,

doth conclude it would not be good for it to be at its own finding, or careing, or carving: and duly eying, that infinite mind and understanding, who in a wonderfull, unaccountable manner, orders all things, and all events to the best and certain issue, is so mastered by, and indeed enamoured with the sense of it; that he renounces his own wisdom, and throws out his own clamorous will, and complies readily with the all-wise God. This is truly to converse with the Wisdom of God, when we do out of choice refer our selves to it, and rowl our selves upon it. Every bare aknowledgement of Divine Wisdom is not a proper conversing with it; but when the same is wrought into the soul, and the lively sense of it doth so over-power the heart that the will is prepared to close readily with such Methods as God shall please to use to accomplish his own ends; then do we properly, and feelingly converse with God, under the notion of the All-wise God. But this of Self-resignation, I spoke something to under the first

head;

head; and much of that which is spoken there, may be indifferently applyed hither. Therefore,

7. Converse with the unbounded *Goodness*, *Love*, *and Mercy of God*. God is infinitely, and unchangeably loving and mercifull to his people: He is *good*, saith the Psalmist, and he is *Love*, saith the Apostle, 1 *John* 4. 8. Those dreadfull and terrifying apprehensions which men have of the blessed and good God, as if he were some austere and surly Majesty, given to passion and revenge, are apt to destroy that chearfull and ingenuous Converse with him, which the creature should maintain with its Creator at all times: But then are we most prone to entertain those apprehensions, and to harbour such unseemly notions of him, when he appears in the way of his judgements, when we take a view of him in the ruines of our comforts, the blood of our friends, the spoyl of our goods, and in the distresses of our lives. We are apt to

frame

frame notions of God according to what we find in our own disposition, to fancy a God like unto our selves; and therefore we cannot eye an afflicting God but we presently conclude an angry God; as though the Eternal and Pure Being were subject to passions and changes, as we are. These apprehensions being once drunk into the soul, it becomes unhinged presently, and almost afraid to behold the face of love it self, but flyes and hides it self, as *Adam* in the Garden: or if the soul do converse with God at all, it is as a City that is besieged converses with the enemy without, *viz.* sending out to seek peace, and to obtain a cessation of Arms. And so a soul may bestow much upon God; surrender up the Castle, give him all that he hath almost, not for any love that he bears to him; but as *Joash* gave *Hazael* a present of gold and precious things, to hire him to depart from him, 2 *Kin.* 12. 18. Oh then they will up and do any thing; yea, circumcise their lives, as *Zipporah* circumcised her Son, *Exod.* 4. 25. to escape the hands of an angry

angry God. Every one will converſe with God as an enemy in time of extremity; hang out a flag for peace, ſend preſents, pay a homage, ſend Embaſſadors, to entreat his face: But few know how to converſe with the Goodneſs and Mercy of God, with him as their dear and only friend in a time of affliction, freely and chearfully. Now there ſeems to be a double account to be given of mens not converſing with the Goodneſs and Mercy of God in the time of afflictions.

1, *Many cannot believe the Mercy and Kindneſs of God, when he is in the way of his Judgements.* If it be ſo, why am I thus? cryes the poor ſoul, ſtrugling under its burden, and traveling in pangs to be delivered of its griefs. Thus unbelievingly argues *Gideon* (who was otherwiſe famous for faith) in the time of his bitter bondage under the *Midianites*, Judge. 6. 13. when an Angel from Heaven was ſent to aſſure him of the goodwill of God towards him, he could not entertain the news, not believe

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the report, because of the anguish of his soul, but cries out, *Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why is all this evil befallen us?* No, the Lord hath forsaken us; for he hath delivered us into the hands of the *Midianites*. The sad soul is ready to cry concerning Christs gracious presence, as the two Sisters concerning his personal presence, *Joh.* 11. 21, 32. *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my Brother had not dyed*: Lord, if thou hadst been here, if thou hadst loved me, if thou hadst had any delight in me, my Brother had not dyed, my husband, my Wife, my Children had not dyed; I had not been thus plagued, afflicted, wounded, tormented as I am. Hence we have those many complaints of the afflicted soul, up and down the Psalms; *Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? Is his Mercy clean gone? Hath he shut up his tender Mercies in anger?* and many such like. The smart of our senses, is apt to pervert the judgment of our minds; and the sense of bodily evils is ready to destroy all sense of the Infinite and Unchangable Goodness and

Love

Love of God. Now this great evil seems to arise from these two causes, *viz. Our measuring of God and his Divine Dispositions, by our selves and humane Passions and affections*, as I hinted before: And *our measuring the Love of God too much by the Proportion that he gives us of wordly prosperity.* Woe to him in a day of distress, that was wont to judge of Divine Love by the things that are *before him*, as *Solomon* calls the things of this world. *Eccles.* 9. 1. This, I say is the temper, the infirmity of many in the time of afflictions: though indeed there be no reason for it. For why should we conclude harshly concerning *Job* upon the dunghill, any more than we would conclude charitably concerning *Ahab* on the Throne? Besides, the Scripture teacheth expressly, that the Love of God doth stand with correction, *Psal.* 89. 33. I will visit his iniquity, but my loving kindness will I not take from him: Nay, it seems as if it could not well stand without it, *Heb.* 12. 6. *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth.*

2. Others

2. Others do indeed believe the Goodneſs and mercy of God to them in a time of affliction, *but either they cannot, or dare not, or will not converſe with it, nor take comfort in it.* They remember God with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal. 77. 3. i. e.* the Goodneſs, Bounty, Mercy of God (ſaith *Mollerus*) and yet at the ſame time are *troubled*; their hearts are unquiet, fluctuating, tumultuous within them. The ſoul is ſo impreſt with the ſenſe of ſin which it hath contracted from the conſideration of its ſufferings, that it dares not preſume to meddle with Mercy, but though this Mercy of God be its own, yet it is ready to think that it is a duty *to forſake its own Mercies* as though it heard God chiding it in the words of *Jehu* to *Jorams* ſcout, *2 King 9. 18. What haſt thou to do with peace?* What haſt thou to do with Mercy? *turn ye behind me.* An afflicted ſoul hath much ado to believe it to be a duty to converſe with the Goodneſs and Love of God in a time of affliction. It eaſily agrees to converſe with the Juſtice, Holineſs, and

and Power of God indeed; but thinks it very improper, and unseasonable, if not unsafe, to converse with his Mercy. It is ready to cry with *Solomon* presently, *In the day of prosperity rejoyce, but in the day of adversity consider*: or with the Apostle, *If any be afflicted, let him pray*; if he be merry, let him sing Psalms. Conversing with the Goodness of God seems not to be a duty of this season. I confess this is a high and hard duty. Every smatterer in Religion will cry out in his affliction, Thou art just and righteous, O Lord: But, Thou art good and merciful: Blessed be the name of the Lord, is the voice of a *Job* only. *Job* 1. 21. But it is a duty, though a hard one; and affording much pleasure and contentment to them that are exercised therein. That the kindness and benignity of God doth not fail, that his Love is not broken off from his people; No nor suspended neither, when he afflicts them most, is most certain. For, though he worketh changes, in and upon us, yet himself is eternally and unchangeably the same,

same, *Jer.* 1. 17. And though some of his dealings towards his people seem to be rough and severe, yet if we judge rightly of them, they are all Mercy and Truth towards them that keep his Covenant, *Psal.* 25. 10. And that the people of God ought to converse with this Divine Love and mercy even in their greatest afflictions, is clear. To this purpose I might alledge the forequoted example of holy *Job*; and might enforce this Doctrine from the Apostles words, *Phil.* 4. 4. and *Jam.* 1. 2. *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*; and from many good Reasons too, if it were needfull. I know indeed that it is a hard thing to keep up a right frame towards, and converse rightly with the Righteousness, and Goodness of God at the same time, the one frame is ready to justle out the other. Sorrow is apt to contract the heart, and destroy the large and cheerful temper of it: And joy doth dilate and enlarge it, and is ready to make it forget its griefs. But though it be hard, yet it is possible: These two may well consist

in the ſame ſoul, according to that in *Pſal.* 2. 11. —— *Rejoyce with trembling.*

But how muſt we converſe with the Love and Mercy of God in the time of afflictions? I have partly prevented my ſelf in this already; but I ſhall ſpeak a little more diſtinctly of it. We do not then converſe with the Goodneſs and Mercy of God, when we barely think of it, or acknowledge it; But,

1. *When we believe and apply it, and take to our ſelves the comforts of it.* When we look through the clouds that are round about us, and quite cover us, and by the eye of faith behold the fountain and Father of Light: when we can look beyond the frowns that are in his face, and the Rod that is in his hand, and ſee the good will that dwels in the heart of God towards us. More eſpecially,

2. When we do not only ſee and believe it, but alſo draw vertue and influences down from it into our ſouls, to eſtabliſh, ſettle, and ſatisfie them. Not much when we ſee it, as when we

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taſte it; when we feel the Sun of Righteouſneſs warm us, though it do not dazle us; and though we cannot perceive it to ſhine upon us, yet we find it to ſhine in us. We do then converſe with the Love and Mercy of God in an afflicted ſtate, when the ſame doth bear us up, not only from utter ſinking, but even from inordinate ſorrowing; when we draw a virtue from it into our ſouls to ſuſtain them, yea and to cheriſh them too. Thus *Job comforts* himſelf in his living Redeemer, *Job* 19. 25. and the Pſalmiſt in the Mercy of God, even when he was ready to ſlip, *Pſal.* 94. 18, 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul.* In a word, we converſe with Divine Goodneſs, when we are really warmed with it; and with Almighty Love, when we rejoyce in it, and can with holy venturouſneſs, and humble confidence throw our ſelves into the very boſome of it: when we receive impreſſions of it from the Spirit of God, and are thereby molded into a temper ſuitable to it, and becoming

it. For then indeed do we moſt happily converſe with the Love and Goodneſs of God, when we for our part do live upon it; when we being aſſured of an intereſt in a loving and good God, do render up our ſelves alſo unto him, in the moſt beautiful and becoming affections of Love, Joy, Confidence, and holy Delight. This is an excellent frame; and ſure I am, it is much for our intereſt, thus to converſe with God in the time of our afflictions. It is a high way of glorifying God, and bringing much credit to Religion: And indeed he that keeps up this frame, can be afflicted but in part; he ſcapes the greater half of the evil: For though it be never ſo ſtormy a time without him, a ſtorm upon his houſe, upon his goods, upon his relations, yea upon his own body; yet it is a calm day within; in the ſoul there is peace and tranquility.

Laſtly (and indeed everlaſtingly too) we are to converſe with the Infinite, *ſelf-ſufficient Fulneſs of God*, in a day of the greateſt extremity: that is, as if I ſhould ſay, not with any one

one ſingle Attribute, but with the very Godhead of God, the immenſe perfection of God, the Allneſs of the Deity. Oh how ſeaſonably doth this bleſſed object preſent its ſelf to the ſoul in a time of afflictions, loſſes, mortalities, perſecutions, when we are moſt emptied of creature enjoyments, and the emptineſs of them doth moſt appear! for upon theſe two doth our converſing with God much depend. I need not tell you how apt we are to live beſide God, when we have our fill of creature-delights; whilſt we can entertain our hearts with a created ſweetneſs, we fooliſhly forget and neglect the ſupream good. And ſo fond and unreaſonable is this affection, that no warnings, no precepts will ſerve the turn; God is forced to break that off from us, from which we would not be broken. Sure I am, the bleſſed and bountiful God envyes not his ſervants any of their creature-comforts or delights; but he loves them (as I ſaid before) with a ſtrong and powerful love, and will not ſuffer them to live ſo much to their loſſes, as they do when

when they ſpend noble affections upon tranſitory things, in the everlaſting enjoyment of which they could never be happy. Now afflictions are a negative, if we ſpeak properly, even as ſin is; and when ever we are afflicted in any kind; we are emptied of ſome created good, as poverty is nothing but the abſence of riches: ſickneſs the want of eaſe, of order, of health in the conſtitution: reſtraint is the loſs of liberty, &c. So then it appears, that in a time of affliction, God is emptying us of creature-enjoyments: for indeed affliction it ſelf is little or nothing elſe but ſuch an emptying or deprivation. And that then the emptineſs of the creature doth moſt appear, I ſuppoſe all will grant. The ſick perſon looks upon his decayed ſtrength, and withering members, and is feelingly convinc't of the truth of the Scripture, ——— *All fleſh is groſs.* Another caſts about his eyes with *Sampſon*, and ſees *heaps upon heaps*, and cryes out like one that feels the weight of his own words, *Childhood and youth are vanity*: or alas how ſoon is the

deſire

desire of ones *eyes taken away with a stroke!* Another sees his goods carryed away before his face; and his house on fire before his eyes, and then cryes out, that he hath a real proof of the vanity of those things, which *Solomon* had long ago observ'd, *Prov.* 23. 5. *Riches take themselves wings and fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven.* Whilst we see the creatures stand, we will not believe but they are stable; whilst we see them fair and flourishing, we cannot rightly lay to heart the withering nature of them: but when we see them *cut down*, we do then conclude they were but *flowers*; when we see them *flitting*, we conclude they are *shadows*; when God *pours* them out upon the ground, we are then convinced that they were unstable as *water*: To shew us what the best of our creature-enjoyments are, God is forced to take them quite away, that they be no more.

Now then in such a case, at such a time, converse with the Infinite, Self-sufficient Fulness of God. Oh now it is seasonable; now it is your duty;

nay

nay now it will be your greateſt policy! If that chanel, that creature-chanel be ſtopt, in which your affections were wont to run too freely; turn the ſtream of them into their proper chanel in which they may run freely, and neither ever meet with obſtruction, nor ever over-flow. Let your Soul grow up into acquaintance and union with God by creature-breaches and diſappointment. More particularly, converſe with the ſelf-ſufficient Fulneſs of God,

1. By the act of *Creature-denyal.* The eying of an infinite, abſolute, uncreated Fulneſs in a right manner, takes off the ſoul from all created objects, earthly things: even as the beholding of the Sun in its glory, dazles the eye to all things below. God becomes ſo great in the eye of the ſoul, that it cannot ſee the poor motes of worldly comforts. Give a ſoul a feeling taſte of the infinite ſweetneſs and fulneſs of the fountain, and its thirſt after the poor puddles of the world is preſently abated, if not perfectly quenched, according to that of our Saviour, *Joh.* 4. 14. *Whoſoever*

ſoever ſhall drink of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt; that is, not after any other thing. Like unto which is that Goſpel promiſe, *Iſa.* 49. 10. they ſhall not thirſt, who do enjoy theſe ſprings of water. When this fountain is opened in the eye of the Soul, and the Soul begins to taſte of it, it longs to drink deeper of that indeed, but as for all other waters, waters of the Ciſtern, the Soul looks upon them as not being, or at leaſt as being bitter, waters of *Marah* in compariſon; we do then truly converſe with the infinite, ſelf-ſufficient Fulneſs of God, when we look upon all created good with a noble diſdain, are content to part with it; or if we do ſtill injoy it, are reſolved to injoy it only in God, and ſo look upon it, and love it, only as a beam from the Father of Lights; as a drop of the infinite Fountain of all Perfections. Tell me, is it not a poor and low thing that many Profeſſors do, who acknowledge and magnifie the uncreated Goodneſs, the Fulneſs of God; and yet at the ſame time do covet and court the Crea-

ture

ture with all eagerneſs; and their worldlineſs is apparently too hard for their Religion? Methinks I hear God ſpeaking to ſuch ſeeming friends, as *Dalilah* to *Sampſon*, Judg. 16. 15. How can ye ſay, you love me, when your heart is not with me? To theſe mens hearts, methinks our Saviours Doctrine ſhould ſtrike cold, *Matth.* 6. 21. *Where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo*: And thoſe words of his beloved Apoſtle, 1 *John* 2. 15. *If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Let a man pretend and profeſs what he will; and in words magnifie the Fulneſs and Sufficiency of God as much as he will; if in the mean time his ſoul be bound up in the creature, ſuch a mans Religion is vain: nay indeed his profeſſion of God becomes a real reproaching of him, and a blaſphemy againſt Reaſon it ſelf. Let your low eſteem of all created good in compariſon of the ſupream good, your readineſs to quit your title to every creature-comfort, and in the mean time, your care to live beſide it, witneſs

the true and honourable eſteem, the true and feeling ſenſe that you have in your hearts of the infinite and ſelf-ſufficient Fulneſs of God. For, however men may make a ſhift to cheat themſelves, God is not truly great in the ſoul, till all other things become as nothing, neither doth the ſoul rightly converſe with his infinite Fulneſs, ſo long as any thing ſtands in oppoſition to it, or competition with it.

2. *Converſe with the ſelf-ſufficient Fulneſs of God by the grace of* Faith: I mean by that act of it, whereby we do intereſt our ſelves, and as it were wrap up our own ſouls in this Fulneſs, and make it our own. And herein there is no danger of an humble ſouls being too bold or venturous: For the Proclamation is full, and the Invitation free, *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Joh.* 7. 37. *Rev.* 22. 17. ——*Whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* What *Seneca* ſaies of the ſoul in regard of the divine original of it, may ſure be better ſaid of a godly ſoul, in reſpect of the Divine Nature, and qualities of it, *Illum divina delectant, nec*

ut alienis interest sed ut suis; it doth not converse with things divine, as with anothers, but as its own. And indeed we cannot truly and comfortably converse with the Infinite Perfection and Fulness of God, if we have no title to it: but then we converse with God, when we converse with our own God, not anothers: when the soul is able to say, All this Fulness of Power, Wisdom, Goodness, is all mine in my head Christ Jesus, for in him *all* this *Fulness dwells*, Col. 2. 9. and he dwelleth in me; *in him are hid* all these treasures, *Col.* 2. 3. and *my life also is hid with Christ in God*, as theirs was in *Col.* 3. 3. You see then, that a soul cannot converse with the Infinite Fulness and Self-sufficiency of God, but by Christ; for it is in and by him that we receive of Divine Fulness, *John* 1. 16. Hence was that of the devout Father, *Tolle meum, tolle Deum*, to which I may add, *Tolle Jesum, & tolli meum.* The fulness of a fountain is nothing to me, except it be mine. There is bread enough in my Fathers house, sayes the poor Prodigal,

but for all that I periſh with hunger: ſo is there living waters evermore in this uncreated life, this infinite Spring of all Perfection; yet many ſouls are choakt with thirſt, becauſe the fountain is not theirs; it is a fountain ſealed, as *Solomon* ſpeaks in another caſe; *The well is deep*, and they have *nothing to draw with*, as the Woman ſaid concerning another Well, *Joh.* 4. Therefore be ſure you get an intereſt in the Fulneſs and Sufficiency of God; or as *Solomon* ſpeaks in another caſe (*Prov.* 5. 15.) Drink waters out of thine own Well.

3. *Converſe with the Self-ſufficient Fulneſs of God, by delighting your ſelves in it.* Drink of this Fountain, yea *drink abundantly* ye *beloved* of God *Canticles* 5. 1. yea, lie down by it, *Pſalm* 23. 2. yea, bathe your ſelves wholly in it; *Enter into the Joy of your Lord*, lie down in his boſome, ſpread your ſelves in his Love and Fulneſs. The Beloved Diſciple leaning upon the breaſt of his Lord at Supper, was but a dark ſhadow, a poor ſcant reſemblance of a beloved ſoul, which by the lovely acts of

Joy

Joy and Confidence, and Delight, layes it self down in the bosome of Jesus, and doth not feed with him, but feed upon him, and his Alsufficiency. Then do we converse indeed, feelingly and comfortably with the Infinite fulness, when the Soul is swallowed up in it, doth rest in it, is filled with it, and centred upon it. Oh the noble and free-born spirit of true Religion, that disdaining the pursuit of low and created things is carryed out with delight to feed, and dwell, and live upon uncreated Fulness! Then is a Soul raised to its just altitude, to the very height of its Being, when it can spend all its powers upon the supream and self-sufficient good, spreading and stretching it self upon God with full contentment, and wrapping up it self entirely in him. This is the Souls way of living above losses; and he that so lives, though he may often be a *loser*, yet shall never be *at a loss*. He who feeds upon created Goodness or Sweetness, may soon eat himself out of all; the stock will be spent, and (which is worse) the Soul will be *dryed up*, that hath

hath nothing elſe to nouriſh it. But he that lives upon uncreated Fulneſs, is never at a loſs, though he loſe never ſo much of the creature: For who will value the ſpilling of a diſh of Water, that hath a well of living Water at his door, from whence he had that, and can have more as good, though not the ſame. Nay, to ſpeak properly, this is the only way to loſe nothing. For how can he be properly ſaid to loſe any thing, who poſſeſſes all things? And ſo doth he I am ſure, who is filled with the Fulneſs of God. Be ſure therefore, that in the want, in the loſs of all things, you live upon the Fountain-fulneſs, delight your ſelf in the Lord, after the example of the Prophet *Habakkuk*, *cap.* 3. 17, 18.

I have gone through the Doctrinal part of my Diſcourſe upon theſe words, which was the thing I mainly intended. Many Inferences might be drawn from it. But I ſhall content my ſelf to forbid, and ſo as it were to remove out of the way, ſome things

things that hinder this great duty; and so shut up all with one word of Exhortation.

1. *Converse not with creature-comforts*, the poor, low, and scant enjoyments of this world: For so I may well call them, though they be never so *high* in the *opinion* of them that have them, and never so *large* as to the *proportion* that any one hath of them: They are low in comparison of that high and supreme good for which the soul was made; and scant as to any real happiness, or satisfaction that they can possibly give. For indeed those sinfull and sensual souls that take up their rest and happiness most in them, are not properly satisfied, but surfeited; not filled, but for the present glutted with them. There are many unlawful, and hurtful wayes of the souls conversing with created comforts: I will not run thorow them all, as not intending any large discourse upon these heads. Converse not with them, fondly delighting in them, and doating upon them: especially take heed of this when God is shaking his Rod over

any of them. Doth God arise and begin to plead with you in judgment, laying his hand upon any of these, and threatning to take them from you? Oh then *hands off*! touch them not. What an unseemly, and indeed monstrous sight is it to see a creature pulling and ruggining against his Creator, and maintaining his supposed right against Heaven it self! Is it for a Heaven-born soul to stand gazing and doating upon, or passionately weeping over created friends, carnal liberty, corporal health, houses made with hands, things below God, yea and below it self too! Pore not too much upon them; value them only in God, and referr them freely to him. If you can say, you have any thing of your own, make much of it, and spare not: But give unto God the things that are Gods, and by that time you have done so, I think you need not dote upon what's left. We ought indeed at all times to enjoy all our creature-comforts with hearts loosened from them: but if formerly our hearts have been too much joyned to them, it is time now to loosen them.

2. Con-

2. *Converse not with creature causes in a time of Affliction.* This is a strange kind of Atheistical temper, into which we are very prone to fall: I speak properly, when I say [Fall,] for it is indeed a falling down from God in our hearts, in whose Infinite Essence all creature-causes are lapt up, and in whose hand the several successes and events of them all do lie. Let a beast that judges by sense, kick at the poor thorn that pricks him: But let rational Souls fix upon the highest and supreme Agent, who in an infinite powerfull and skilfull manner, uses what creature he will, for what end he will, and sends it of an errand which it self knows not. Why do we run hunting poor Partridge-instruments upon the mountains of contemplation? Shall the noble faculties of an immortal soul spend themselves upon such an inquisition? or is it just to pursue an innocent creature out of breath for being an instrument in the hand of God? to quarrel with the Sword, because it suffered its self to be drawn, or beat the Air, because it

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is infected? This were indeed to go out with the King of *Israel*, with much warlike preparation, to catch Fleas. I deny not but that wise men may look into second causes, and make many profitable Observations from them, both for present and future; and all men may and ought to learn many wholesom lessons even from the instrument that afflicts them: But sure I am, a godly man will not dwell upon these; he will not fix here, but readily resolve all into an higher cause, and so falls to converse with that: Much less will he blame or murmur at a poor harmless Arrow, that flew no further than it was shot, nor pierced no deeper than it was bidden. Yea, though the second cause were a sinful cause, a rational Agent, and so consequently acted by malicious and evil principles; yet a godly soul knows how to distinguish between him, and his action: he hates him as a sinner, but comports well enough with him as Gods instrument: and though he condemns his action as it varies from Gods command, yet he approves of it as being ordered

by

by Gods hand and counsel. *David* hated cursing as much as any man; yet did he so eye the hand of God in every thing, and comply with it too, that there was a time when he said concerning *Shimei*, *So let him curse:* Concerning this I hinted something before under another head. Therefore,

3. *Converse not with creature-cures, creature-relief.* These may indeed be lookt out after, and safely made use of when they are found: Nay, I will add further, that they are to be sought diligently, and used carefully. They that know the Infinite Soveraignty, power and Wisdom of God, will not tye him to means, much less to these or those particular means: But on the other hand, they that understand Gods usual and ordinary way of acting and governing, and upholding the World, will not tye him up from means; no, nor expect that he should appear for their relief immediately and miraculously. Though if any one have a miraculous faith truly grounded upon some special and particular

ticular Promise, I will not contend with him only I would desire to see his marculous faith justified by some miraculous works, which I conceive do alwaies attend it. But the converse with Creature-cures which I forbid, is the immoderate seeking of them, or the inordinate using of them. To seek after means in themselves unlawful, can never become lawfull: But I speak not of these. For, although some are come to that height of Atheism and abjuration of God, as to retain the Devil himself for a counsel in a time of straits, as *Saul* did; and contract with the Prince of death for the preservation of life in time of sickness, as *Ahaziah* did: And I doubt very many do fall into acquaintance with that evil spirit, and receive assistance from him before they be well aware, by medling with unphysical, unscriptural, unwarrantable cures: yet the greatest danger is not in these: *in licitis primus error*, the greatest danger is of miscarrying about things in themselves lawfull. And that is chiefly by those two

wayes

wayes which I named but now. Take heed therefore of immoderate seeking after created helps, Be not anxious, perplexed, tormented in mind by a passionate desire of any of these. Oh what a raging and unquenchable thirst have many men after creature-cures! They will move heaven and Earth, and almost Hell too (with her in the Poet) but they will find out relief. Give me a Physician, or I dye sayes one; Give me Trading, good Markets, a plentiful Crop, or I am undone, saies another. What man, is thy life lapt up in a pill, or incorporated into a potion? Is thy main happiness in the abundance of these things here below? or wilt thou say to the wind, Blow here in this quarter, and no where else; tye up the supream and free Agent to a form and method of working? Let not such a prophane disposition be found amongst us. Again, if you have found our hopefull creature-cures, take heed of using them in a inordinate manner, laying stress upon them, *looking earnestly on them*, as though they by

their

their *own power and proper vertue* could make the lame to walk, or the ſick to recover. Eye not, much leſs depend upon the vertue of any created means as diſtinct from God. But acknowledge the power, and vertue, and goodneſs of every created Being, to be the power, and vertue, and goodneſs of God in that creature; and ſo conſequently uſe it in ſubordination and ſubſerviency to the ſupream cauſe, who can at pleaſure, let looſe or ſuſpend the influences and vertues of every ſuch means.

4. *Converſe not with* creature-loſſes *in a time of affliction.* The ſinfull ſoul that hath ſtraggled off from God, and centred upon the creature, is alwayes intemperate and reſtleſs: If it be diſappointed in its converſe with creature-cures, and ſees that for all theſe, his comforts are cut off, health, liberty, friends, are periſhed; then he falls to converſe with his loſſes, and ſpends the powers of his Soul in diſcontents, complaints, and many diſmal paſſions. Oh then, alas, I am undone! *What ſhall I do for the hundred talents!*

talents! I am the only *man that hath seen affliction; no sorrow like unto my sorrow*: I shall *go softly* all my dayes, for the *joy of my heart* is perished, the delight of my eyes is cut off. Thus *Rachel* weeps for her children, and will not be comforted: *Rizpah* attends the carkasses of her Sons, and will not be parted from them, 2 *Sam.* 21. It is a strange thing that a soul should live upon its losses: And yet how many do so! Their very soul cleaveth to the dust, where their creature-comforts are interred whose souls are so much bound up in the creature, that they will needs live and dye together with them. If God smite the Gourd, and make it to wither, *Jonah* droops, and will needs dye too, *Jonah* 4. 8, 9. If *Joseph* be missing a while, *Jacob* will not be comforted; no, he will go down into the grave unto his Son mourning, *Gen.* 37. 35. Who would have thought to have heard such words, from such wise men, as a Prophet and a Patriarch! Oh the strange and unbounded power which this unseemly creature-love hath

obtained

obtained over the best of men! which makes me call him a happy man, almost more than a man, compeer of Angels, who hath learnt to converse with God alone. Well, converse not with creature-losses; let not your soul take up its lodging by the carkasses of your created-comforts, with *Rizpah*; dwell not upon the lowest round of the ladder, but climb up by it to the meaning of God, and to some higher good, and more excellent attainment. They live to their loss, who live upon their losses; who dwell upon the dark side of the dispensation: For every dark Providence hath one bright side, wherein a godly Soul may take comfort, if he be not wanting to himself.

5. *Converse not with* flesh and blood. By flesh and blood, I suppose the Apostle means no more than men, *Gal.* 1. 16. And indeed if we confer with men only for counsel, and repair to men only for comfort in a time of affliction, we shoot short of the mark. But by flesh and blood the Scripture elsewhere often means, man in this [illegible] his

his animal ſtate, as he is in his corruptible, mortal body; as 1 *Cor.* 15. 50. and many other places. And in this ſenſe I ſpeak, when I ſay Converſe not with fleſh and blood. Judge not according to your ſenſes; let not your own ſenſual appetite determine what is good or evil, ſweet or bitter: Conſult with rectified Reaſon, and not with brutiſh appetite; converſe with Faith, and not with Fancy. Rectified Reaſon will judg that to be really good, which our ſenſual appetite diſtaſts: An enlightned mind will judge that to make for the intereſt of the ſoul, and its eternal *happy ſtate*, which ſenſe judges hurtful to the intereſt of the body, and its *animal ſtate*. It is not poſſible there ſhould be any order, nor conſequently any peace or reſt in that ſoul, where the inferiour faculties dominere over the ſuperiour, and ſenſitive powers Lord it over the intellectual; and where raging appetite, and extravagant fancy muſt clamber up into the throne to determine caſes, and right Reaſon muſt ſtoop and bow before it.

Be admoniſhed to fly converſe with all theſe, if you would converſe rightly, purely, properly, comfortably with God, which is the higheſt office and attainment of created nature. Conſider what I have ſaid concerning this excellent and high employment; and awaken your ſouls, and all the powers of them to meet the Lord God, and converſe with him aright in the way of his judgments. Converſe with God, with God in Chriſt, with God in his promiſes, with God in his attributes, and labour to do it not ſpeculatively, notionally, but really, practically, according as I have directed in the foregoing diſcourſe. Religion is not an empty, airy, notional thing; it is not a matter of thinking, nor of talking; but it hath a real exiſtence in the ſoul, and doth as really diſtinguiſh, though not ſpecifically, one man from another, as Reaſon diſtinguiſhes all men from beaſts: Converſe with God is ſet out in Scripture, by *living*, and *walking*, and the like. Let me inculcate this thing therefore again, and preſs it upon you, and I ſhall finiſh all. As the

way of glorifying God in the world, is not by a meer thinking of him, or entertaining some notion of his glory into our heads, but consists in a real participation of his image, in a God-like disposition, and holy conversation, according to that of our Saviour, *Joh.* 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, &c.* So the way of conversing with God in his several attributes, is not a thinking often with our selves, and telling one another that God is just, wise, merciful, &c. though this be good: But it is a drinking in the virtue and value of these divine perfections, a working of them into the soul; and on the other hand, the souls rendring of it self up to God in those acts of Grace which do suit with such attributes, as in water, face answereth face. I do not call bare performance of duties a conversing with God: Prayer and Meditation, &c. are excellent means in and by which our soul converses with God; but communion with God is properly somewhat more spiritual, real, powerful, and divine, according as I described it just now. As for example;

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The soul receives the impressions of divine *Soveraignty* into it, and gives up itself unto God in the Grace of *Self-denial*, and humble subjection. The soul receives the communications of divine *Fulness* and Perfection, and entertains the same with *Delight* and *Complacency*; and, as it were, grows full in it. Even as the communications of the virtues of the Sun are answered with life, and warmth, and growth in the plants of the earth: So a souls conversing with the attributes of God, is not an empty notion of them; or a dry discourse concerning them, but a *Reception of Impressions* from them, and a *Reciprocation* to them: The effluxes of these from God, are such as do beget reflections in man towards God. This is to know Christ, to grow up in him into all things according to that in 1 *Joh.* 3 6. *Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither knows him.*

A FAREWEL TO LIFE.

2 COR. 5. 6.

——ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι, ἐκδημοῦμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου. *Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.*

THE holy Apostle having in the first verse of this Chapter laid down the Doctrine of Eternal Glory, which shall follow upon this transitory life of Believers, shews in the following verses how he himself longed within himself, and groaned after that happy state: And then proceeds to give a double ground of this his confident

confident expectation; one in *verſ.* 5. therefore is the Apoſtle confident concerning the putting off of this mortal body, becauſe God had wrought and formed him for this ſtate of glory, and already given him an *earneſt* of it, even his holy Spirit: The other ground of the confidence and ſettledneſs of his mind as to his deſires of a change, is taken from his preſent ſtate in the body, which was but poor and uncomfortable in compariſon of that glorious ſtate: This in the words of the Text, *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.* For I do not take the words [we are confident] concerning the Apoſtles reſolvedneſs with a quiet and ſober mind to ſuffer any kind of perſecution or affliction whatever; but *we are always confident*, i. e. we do with confidence expect, or at leaſt we are always well ſatisfied, contented, well reſolved in our minds concerning our departure out of this life: For the Apoſtle was ſpeaking, not of afflictions or perſecutions in the former

verſe,

verses, but indeed of death; which he calls a dissolving of the earthly house of this tabernacle, *vers.* 1. and a being cloathed upon with our house which is from Heaven, *vers.* 2. 4. Yea, and thus the Apostle explains himself, *vers.* 8. where he tells you what he means by this his confidence, *we are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body*; where the latter words are exegetical to the former, *q. d.* It is better to be with the Lord, than in this mortal body; but we cannot be with the Lord, whilst we are in this body, it keeps us from him, therefore we have the confidence to part with it. It is the reason of the Apostles confidence and willingness to part with the body, that I am to speak of; and the reason is, because this body keeps him from his Lord, ——*whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* The words are a Metaphor, and are to be translated thus, *we inhabiting in the body, do dwell out from the Lord*; which our Translation renders well, taking little notice of the Metaphor, *whilst we are at*

home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. Though indeed if they had left out that word [*at home*] it would have been as well, and so have neglected the Metaphor altogether, as we may haply hint hereafter. The words are a reason of the Apostles willingness to be dissolved, and do contain a kind of an accusation of the body, and so seem to lay a blame upon it, and upon this animal life; which must be remembred. Now for the former phrase of being at home in the body, it is easily understood, and generally (I think) agreed upon, to be no more than whilst we carry about with us this corruptible flesh, whilst we live this natural animal life. It only signifies man in his compounded animal state, ἀνθρωπος ὁ ψυχικὸς, and doth not at all allude to his sinful, unregenerate or carnal state, but the latter phrase [*Absent from the Lord*] is capable of a double sense, both good and true, and I think both fit enough to the context and drift of the Apostle. I shall speak to both, but insist most upon the latter.

1. Wh

1. Whilst we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord, *i. e. from the bodily presence of the Lord in Heaven*, absent from Christ Jesus and his glory: And so the words are the same in sense with 1 *Cor.* 15. 50. *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*; for by *flesh and blood* there, must needs be meant man in this animal corruptible state. And so the Apostle accuses this kind of life in the body; and, as it were, blames it for standing between him and his glorified Lord; and so consequently between him and the glory of his Lord. And this sense doth well agree with what went before, and with what follows. The Apostle hath a great mind to depart; for whilst he is in the body, he is absent from his perfect happiness: For this is the consummation of a Christians happiness, to be with the Lord, to be admitted to a beholding of his infinite glory; as appears by our Saviours earnest Prayer for this, *Joh.* 17. 24. *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* Besides,

if we shall see him as he is, we must also needs be made like unto him, 1 *John* 3. 2. else how can we be fit to live for ever in his presence? Now are we kept from this seeing and beholding of the Lord in glory, by this animal life: It stands between us and the Crown, between us and our Masters Joy, between us and the perfect enjoyment of God. To be with the Lord, is a state of perfect freedom from sin. No unclean thing shall, or can enter into Heaven, *Rev.* 21. 27. A perfect freedom from all manner of afflictions, *Rev.* 21. 4. *There shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, and* ἀπ' αὐτῶν πᾶν δάκρυον, all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes: A state of freedom from all temptations to sin: For a tempting Devil, and all tempting lusts shall be cast out for ever: A state of perfect peace without the least disturbance from within, or from without: of perfect joy, that shall neither have end nor abatement; and of perfect holiness; when the whole soul shall be enlarged and raised to know, and love, and enjoy the blessed

God as much as created nature is capable. This is the happy state of seeing God, of being with the Lord: And it is thy corruptible body, this animal life that interposes between us and it, so that the Apostle is confident, and rather willing to depart and be with the Lord, than stay here and be without him.

2. Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, without any reference to the World to come, and so it may be fitly translated *distant* from the Lord, estranged from God; This agrees well with the context, and scope of the Apostle also. And thus the words are also a good ground of the Apostles resolution and willingness to dye, *q. d.* I am willing to be absent from this body; for whilst I am in it, I find my self to be at a great distance from God. And indeed the word ἐνδημῶν signifies properly *to be at a distance*, or to be estranged: So I find it interpreted by a learned Critick, without any mystery, (as he speaks) of the distance that even Believers themselves stand at from God in

this life. And in this sense I shall chuse to prosecute the words. In which sense the Apostle blames this body and animal life, because it keeps us at a distance from God; is a clog, a snare, a fetter, a pinion to the Soul. And so the words do agree in sense with those of our Saviour, *Mat.* 26. 41. *The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*; where by the [*flesh*] must needs be understood the body, if we consider the context, *viz.* the occasion upon which the words were spoken, the sleepiness of the Apostles; or if we consider the propriety of speech according to the style of the New Testament: True indeed, the corruption of nature is sometimes called *Flesh*; but according to that way of speaking, our Saviour would rather have said, That the spirit was willing, but the flesh was strong; as he saith elsewhere, That the *strong man* armed kept the house. Now to explain this Doctrine a little; *That even the godly themselves, whilst they are in this body, are at a distance from the Lord*: It must be granted, that the godly soul is nigh unto God,

God, even whilst it sojourns in this mortal body, and tottering flesh. All souls are involved in the Apostacy of *Adam*, and are fallen down from God, have alike straggled from their God, and are sunk into self and the creature: God opened a way for their return by the blood of Jesus; for we owe it unto Christs death, not only that God is *reconciled to us* pardoning our sins, but that any of our natures become *reconciled to God*, by accepting of him as our God, and loving him as the chiefest good. Now there is a double being brought nigh to God by Christ. The first is more general, external; and, as I may say, relational: Thus the partition-wall being broken down, the Gentiles that were converted from their Idolatry, to a profession of God and Christ, and admitted to a communion with the Visible Church, are upon that account said to be *Brethren* to the rest of Gods Children, *1 Cor.* 5. 11. and as to the Church, they are said to be *within* it, *vers.* 12. though at the same time they were *Fornicators, Co-*

vetous, *Drunkards*: And as to God, they are said to be *made nigh*, Ephes. 2. 13. A professing of God is said to be a being nigh to him; and even an external performance is said to be a drawing nigh to him; and so *Nadab* and *Abihu*, even in the offering of strange fire, are said to have drawn nigh to God, *Levit.* 10. 3. And this, though it be a priviledge, yet it is not that honourable priviledge of the truly godly souls, who are by Christ Jesus raised up to God in their hearts, and reconciled to him in their natures, and united to him in their affections; and so are made nigh unto him in a more especial and spiritual manner. Thus all sinful and wicked souls, notwithstanding all their profession and performances, are far from God, estranged from the life of God. Enmity and dissimilitude are the most real distance from God: And truly God-like souls only are nigh unto him; they dwell in him, and he dwelleth in them as in his most proper Temple. As to any kind of Apposition, no man can draw nigh to God, nor by any local accession;

ſion; for ſo all men are alike nigh to him who is every where, and the worſt as well as the beſt of men do live and move in him: But they are really nigh unto God, who do enjoy him; and they only enjoy him, whoſe natures are conformable to him in a way of love, goodneſs, and God-like perfections. We do not enjoy God by any groſs and external conjunction with him, but we enjoy him, and are nigh unto him by an internal union; "when a Divine Spirit informeth and "acteth our ſouls, and derives a Di-"vine Life into them, and through "them: And ſo a godly ſoul only is really and happily nigh unto God. Thus the Apoſtle *Paul*, I believe, was as nigh unto God as any man in the world, who did not only live and move in God, as all men do (though few underſtand it) but God did even live, and, as it were, breath in him: the very life that he lived was *by faith in the Son of God*, Gal. 2. 20. For, though he walked *in* the flesh, yet he did not walk *after* the flesh, 2 *Cor.* 10. 3. And yet this gracious ſoul, even as all other

believers, was at a distance from God; and that not so much by reason of his creatureship; for of that he doth not speak (so the very Angels of God at an infinite distance from God) but by reason of this mortal body, and animal life, which hindred him from being so nigh to God, as his soul was capable to be, —— *whilst we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord*, i. e. at a great distance from God.

1. We are distant from God as to that *Knowledge* which we shall have of him. Philosophical Divines speak of a threefold Knowledge, 1. κατ' ἐπιστήμην, an essential Knowledge of God. This is that unspeakable light, whereby the Divine Nature comprehends its own essence, wherein God seeth himself κατ' ἐπιστήμην, by Science. This man is capable of in this life. But this kind of knowing of God by way of Science, is but a low and dry thing, common to good and bad, men and Devils, and is indeed the perfection of the *learned*, more than of the godly. 2. And this kind of Knowledge of God,

" the glorified ſoul will reckon but like
" a Fable, or a Parable, when it ſhall be
" once ſwallowed up in God, feaſting
" upon truth it ſelf, and ſeeing God in
" the pure rayes of his own divinity,
3. κατ' ἐπόπτειαν, or by Intuition: this man
cannot attain to in this life, in its
perfection, becauſe it ariſes from a
bliſsful union with God himſelf, which
is in this animal ſtate imperfect. This
in the Platonick phraſe is ἐπαφὴ τοῦ νοητοῦ,
a contact of God, and in Scripture
language, a beholding of God face to
face, which we are not capable of in
this animal concrete ſtate. So may
the anſwer of God to *Moſes* be under-
ſtood, when he beſought God to ſhew
him his glory, *Exod.* 33. 18. *i. e.* to
imprint a diſtinct Idea of his Divine
Eſſence upon his mind, *verſ.* 20. *No
man can ſee me and live*; *i. e.* no man in
this corruptible ſtate and animal life is
capable of ſeeing me as I am, to ap-
prehend my Divine Eſſence, to ſee my
face. The Viſion of God is not in
this life, but in the other; ſo that a
man muſt dye before he can thus know
God. This is the expoſition of Jewiſh

Doctors,

Doctors, and our learned Country-men do approve it also. This blessed Knowledge of God we are at a distance from, whilst we are in this body: so the Apostle plainly, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. *Now we see darkly as through a glass*, but the time will come when we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. Now our body principally hinders the operation of our minds, when they do exercise themselves about the nature of God, whilst it presents its fancies, and gross imaginations to the soul; so it becomes, as it were, a vail upon the face of the soul, draws a cloud, and casts a mist over its eyes, that it cannot discern distinctly, nor judge properly and spiritually. And with allusion to this, that passage of the Apostle is proper and significant: we see *as* "*through a glass*, which glass is indeed "continually sullied and darkened "whilst we look into it, by the breath-"ing of our animal fancies and ima-"ginations upon it. Not only those stinking fogs of pride and self-love, and other sinful corruptions that do arise out of the soul it self,

do

do hinder our right perceptions of God; (as the earth sends out vapors out of it self which arise and interpose between it self and the Sun) but even the animal fancy casts in its Phantasms and imaginations as a mist before the eye of the soul, which through Divine Grace hath been somewhat enlightned, and cleared from its inbred sinful humours. Though corruption in the mind be as a rheume in its eye, so that it cannot well see, yet that doth not hinder, but that the fancy by presenting its unspiritual imaginations, doth also cast a mist before it, that it cannot see well, nor judge rightly; and so it is either held in gross ignorance, or lapses into errour. But in the Regeneration this sense either shall not be, or shall be pure and spiritual.

2. Whilst we are in the body, we are distant from God, as to that service which we ought to perform to him in the world. And herein it were endless to run thorow all those outward duties which we owe unto God in the body, and to shew how the

body,

body becomes a hindrance either to them, or in them. Though the soul be made willing and forward, by a divine principle implanted in it, yet the body remains a body, a weak and sluggish instrument; and so it will be whilst it is animal; it will go down into the dust a *weak* body, 1 *Cor.* 15. 43. What man ever had a more willing and chearful heart than *Moses* the friend of God? Yet his hands were *heavy*, and ready to hang down, *Exod.* 17. 12. Shall I instance in the excellent duty of Preaching and Hearing? wherein the spirits of the most spiritual Preacher are soon exhausted; *the tongue of the learned* is ready to cleave to the roof of his mouth; the head is seized with dizziness; the heart with pantings; the organs of speech with weariness; and the knees with trembling; and the ears of the most devout hearers with heaviness; the eyes with sleepiness; and the whole body in a short time with weakness. Shall I instance in the noble duty of Prayer? wherein the pious soul goes out to God, but can scarce get its body

to

to accompany it; and there the fancy distracts, the senses divert; and indeed all the members are ready to play the *Truants*, if not the *Traitors* too: especially the brain, where the soul sits enthroned, is suddenly environed with a rude rout of sluggish vapours arising from the stomach, and being no longer able to defend it self against them, falls down dead in the midst of them: Insomuch that the poor soul is ready to wish sometimes with the sorrowful Prophet, *Oh that I had in the Wilderness a lodging place, that I might leave my members, and go from them, for they are all an assembly of treacherous servants*: or wish that it were like its Saviour, who could leave his own Disciples asleep, and go and pray apart, and come again unto them. Shall I instance in that high duty of sustaining Martyrdom, bearing persecutions for God? Come on my Body, cryes the holy Soul, come on to the stake; come my head, lay down thy self upon this block; come my Body, compose thy self in this

dark dungeon; come, my feet, fit your ſelves into theſe ſtocks; come, my hands, draw on theſe fetters, theſe Iron bracelets; come, come drink the cup that my Father gives thee. But oh, how it follows to the ſtake! what ſhaking, ſhrivelling, trembling, and reluctancy may you ſee in the whole ſtructure of it! The head hangs down, the eyes run over, the lips quaver, the ſhoulders pull back, the hands tremble, the knees knock together, and the whole fabrick is ready to tumble down, for fear of falling. Either to this (as ſome interpret) or to that duty of Prayer (as others) doth that of our Saviour refer, *Mark* 14. 38. *The ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak.* It ſeems the ſpirit of the weakeſt Chriſtian is ſtrong, though the body (as we have ſeen) of the ſtrongeſt Saint is weak: Though indeed it is not properly the weakneſs that is in the body, that I am to ſpeak to, but the influence that the body hath upon the ſoul to weaken that: for, whilſt the ſoul ſympathizes with the body, attends to it, ſpares it, pities

it,

it, it self becomes almost ill affected to the service of God. I am not so much blaming the body, because it had need by reason of its slothfulness to be drawn on to duty; but because by its influences, it draws on the soul also from them: for so we find it by woful experience, that if the body do sleep, the soul cannot wake; it cannot hear without the ear, nor see without the eyes; so that the bodies wearines at length ends in the souls unwillingness; and the weakness of the one, grows to be the sin of the other.

3. Whilst we are in the body, we are at a distance from God, as to *communion* with him: we are estranged from fellowship with him; and this is indeed to be absent from the Lord. Oh how many weary and uncomfortable dayes do poor Saints live at a great distance from their God, their Life, their Happiness, whilst they are in their worldly pilgrimage, in their Cage of flesh! Oh how many dayes do they forget God, and are apt to think that God hath forgotten them too! How do

do they live sometimes, as it were without God in the world, their souls being surfeited with carnal pleasures benummed with fears, frozen with self love, choaked with cares, stifled with griefs, and seem to have no more feeling of God their life, than a body in the dust hath of the soul its life! Oh what a heavy yoke doth the poor soul draw under, when it plows and harrows to the flesh, and cannot lift up its head to Heaven! Oh how our intercourse with God obstructed, our beholding of him obscured, our entertaining of him prevented, our enjoyment of him disturbed and violated, our love to him deadned, and his love to us damped; ours rendred infirm, and his rendred insensible, and all by this make-bate mortal flesh! Alas what uncertainties and vicissitudes, what changing and tossings, turnings and windings are our poor pilgrim souls here exercised with! What breakings and piecings reconciliations and fallings out, closings and parting, rising and falling, what ups and downs, what forward

wards and backwards doth the poor diſtreſſed ſoul experience in this animal ſtate! The flouriſhing ſoul withers; the lofty ſoul languiſhes; the vigorous ſoul fainteth; the nimble ſoul flaggeth; the devout ſoul swooneth; the lively ſoul ſickeneth, and is ready to give up the Ghoſt; and ſhe that was a while ago reſting and glorying in the arms of her Lord, anon lyes embracing a dunghill, and hath almoſt forgotten that ever ſhe was happy; her peace is violated, her reſt is diſturbed; her converſe with Heaven interrupted, her incomes from God are few and inſenſible, her outgoings to him are few and lazy, and the rivers of her divine pleaſures are almoſt dryed up. And all this, whilſt ſhe is in this body: and indeed a great part of it by reaſon of this body in which ſhe is: The animal body keeps us diſtant from the Lord, that we cannot converſe with him, mind him, enjoy him, live upon him, and live to him. The body being fitted only for this animal ſtate, is ever drawing

drawing down the Soul, when it would raiſe up it ſelf in contemplation of and communion with the bleſſed God. And ſo,

1. The *Neceſſities* of the body do hinder the ſouls communion with the Lord. Not that the neceſſities of the body are ſimply in themſelves to be blamed, but the caring for theſe doth ſo exerciſe the Soul in this ſtate, that it cannot attend upon God without diſtraction. Oh how much doth the neceſſary caring for meat and drink food and phyſick; yea, the ordering of temporal affairs, eſtrange from communion and converſe with God! ſo that the ſoul, like poor *Martha*, is cumbred with many cares, and buſied with *much ſerving* in this houſe, and cannot attend ſo devoutly and entirely as it ought upon the Lord. If the body be pinched with pain, the Soul cannot be at reſt, but muſt needs look out for relief: If the body be pinched with hunger and thirſt, the Soul can take no reſt, till it have found out a ſupply for it: If the one be ſick the other is ſad, if the one be hun-

gry

gry or thirsty, the other seems to languish; like *Hippocrates* his Twins that laught and cryed, lived and dyed together.

It is a wonderful mystery, and a rare secret, how the soul comes to sympathize with the body, and to have not only a knowledge, but, as it were, a feeling of its necessities; how these come to be conveyed to the Soul, and how it comes to be thus affected with them. But we find it so: And indeed to speak truth, it seems necessary for the maintaining of this animal state, that it should be so, that the soul should be, as it were, hungry, weary, sick, and sleepy too together with the "body: for if our Soul should not "know what it is to be hungry, thirsty, "cold, or sick, or weary, but by a bare "ratiocination, or a dry syllogistical "inference, without any more especial feeling of these necessities, it "would soon suffer the body to languish and decay, and commit it "wholly to all changes and salvages: "neither would our own body be any "more to us, than the body of a Plant "or

"or of a star, which we do many "times view with as much clearness "and contemplate with as much con- "tentment as we do our own. But "in the mean time, the soul is diverted "from its main employment, turned "aside from its communion with God, "not so much by providing somewhat "for our bodies to eat, and drink, and "put on, which is lawful and needful, "as our Saviour implies, *Mat.* 6. 32. "as by sinking it self into the body, "being passionately and inordinately "affected with its wants, and so be- "ing sinfully thoughtful, as our Sa- "viour intimateth in the same chapter "*vers.* 31."

2. The *Passions* of the body do hin- der the Souls communion with the Lord. So powerful is the interest and influence that this body hath in and over the soul, that it fills it with de- sires, pleasures, griefs, joys, fears, an- gers, and sundry passions. The body calls out the soul to attend upon its se- veral passions, which I dare not say are sinful in themselves, as they first affect our souls, no more than it is our sin

that

that we are men: our belsed Saviour seems not to have been free from them, as grief, *Isa.* 53. 3. fear, *Heb.* 5. 7. who yet was free from all sin, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22. Nay, it seems necessary (as I said before) considering the nature of this animal life, that the soul should have the corporeal passions and impressions feelingly and powerfully conveyed to it, without which it could not express a due benevolence to the body that belongs to it: and indeed, were it not so, we could not properly be said (in the Apostles phrase here) to be at home in the body: the soul would rather dwell *in domo aliena quasi sua.* But the soul being called out to attend upon these passions, is easily ensnared by them: for it can hardly exercise it self about them, but it slips insensibly into a sinful inordinacy. As for example: "The animal spirits nimbly playing in the brain, and swiftly flying from thence thorow the nerves up and down the whole body, do raise the fancy with mirth and chearfulness, which we must not presently mistake for

"the

"the power of grace, nor condem
"for the working of corruption: S
"also when the Gall empties its bitte
"juice into the Liver, and that mingle
"it self with the blood there, it beget
"fiery spirits, which presently flye u
"into the brain, and cause impressio
"of anger. Now though I dare no
say, that the souls first sensating an
entertaining of these passions is sin
ful, yet it is sadly evident that ou
souls being once moved by these un-
disciplin'd animal spirits, are very ap
to sit upon, and cherish those passion
of grief, fear, mirth, anger, and, as i
were, to work them into it self, in a
inordinate manner, and contrary t
the dictates of reason, and so the wi
presently makes those sinful, whic
before were but meerly humane, o
as one calls them, ζωαὶ σωμάτων, th
meer blossomings or shootings forth o
animal life within us. We see then i
these particulars, that not only the de-
praved dispositions of the soul do kee
us at a distance from God, but eve
this body also is a great hinderance i
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shall attain to, that service of God which we might perform, and that sweet communion with him, which we shall enjoy. It is a clog to the soul that would run; a mist to the soul that would see clearly; a manacle to the soul that would work; a snare to the soul that would be free; a fetter to chain it to earthly and material things, and, as it were, a pinion to the wings of contemplation: More particularly, it is a hinderance to it, as to those three things which I have named: As to the souls knowledge of God, the body is an occasion of ignorance and errour: As to its serving of God, an occasion of distraction and wearinesse; lightnesse and triflingnesse; and as to its communion with God, an occasion of earthlinesse and sensuality. Now this distance which this body keeps the Soul at from God, might more particularly appear in another way of explication, by observing the especial grievances that do arise to the soul from those three great animal faculties (if I may so speak) The Senses, the Appetite, the Fancy.

1. The *Senses*, I mean the external senses of the body; seeing, hearing, &c. these convey passions to the soul, upon which it insists and feeds with a sinfull fondness and eagerness. Set open the eye, and it will set hard to convey some species to the soul of earthly objects, that shall justle the Idea's of God out of it. Set open the ear, and it will fill the Soul with such a noise, and earthly tumult, that the secret whispers of the divine Spirit cannot be heard. The like I may say of the rest: Oh how easily do these discompose the fixed soul, distract the devout soul, cast a mist before the contemplative soul, and hale down the raised soul from communion with Heaven to converse with earthly objects! *Ut vidi, ut perii!* is the complaint of many a Christian, as well as it was of the Heathen. The souls of most men are quite sunk into their senses, and do nothing but, as it were lacquey to them all their lives, and so the servants are on horse-back, and Princes go on foot. Though the eye will never be satisfied with seeing, nor the

ear

ear with hearing; yet forsooth, these importunate suiters must be gratified: the eye must see what it will see, and the ear must hear what it will hear: nothing must be with-held from them, that these childish senses do whine after. These mens souls are indeed incarnate, swallowed up in their eyes, ears and mouths. But not only these, but even godly souls are often charmed and ensnared by their senses; even they converse not only *in* the body, but too much *with* it also; and it becomes as a *Dalilah*, to sull them asleep, and bind them too. Good *Job* found his senses so treacherous, that he was fain to make a covenant with them, *Job* 31. 1. And well if he could scape so too. The words are a Metaphor; for indeed the worst of it is, that these senses are not capable of any discipline; one cannot bring them into any covenant-terms: so that whilst we have senses, they will be treacherous; whilst our eyes are in our heads, they will be wandring after forbidden objects.

2. The *Appetite*, the sensitive appetite, which is a faculty of the

ſenſitive ſoul, whereby this animal man is ſtirred up to deſire and luſt after the things which his ſenſes have dictated to him. This bodily luſt following upon the neck of the former, becomes a greater ſnare to the ſoul: This reſtleſs ſuitor comes whining ever and anon to the ſoul for every trifle that the eye hath ſeen, or the ear heard, or the mouth hath taſted; and by its continual coming, and importunate crying wearies her into an obſervance of it: As the fond child comes crying to the Mother for every knack and gew-gaw that it hath ſeen upon the ſtalls, and ſhe, though ſhe cannot in judgment approve of the requeſt, yet either in fond indulgence, or for peace ſake, will condeſcend to purchaſe it. This is the Daughter of the Horſleech, that cryes continually, *Give*, *Give*: Why, what would it have? even any thing that it hath ſeen, or heard, or touched, or taſted; any thing that it ſees a fellow creature to be poſſeſt of: And ſo indeed the Appetite doth not only enſnare the ſoul unto drunkenneſs and gluttony, but voluptuouſneſs, laſcivi-

laſciviouſneſs, , and all manner of ſenſuality. The evil of the ſenſual appetite appears in wantonneſs and laſciviouſneſs (whether real, verbal, or mental) in immoderate and inordinate trading, ingroſſing, ſporting, building, attiring, ſleeping, viſiting, as well as in eating and drinking. I will determine nothing concerning the firſt motions of the appetite, whereby it ſollicits the will to fulfil it; only this, that if it ſollicite to any thing ſimply and morally evil, it is ſinful in that firſt act; and that at all times it ought carefully to be watcht, leſt it ſeduce to intemperance in things lawful. But concerning the gratifying of the appetite, ſeeing there muſt be in us a ſenſitive appetite, whilſt we are in this animal ſtate, it is to be endeavoured, as far as may be, that we gratifie the appetite, not as it is a ſenſitive appetite, but under this notion, as the thing that it deſires makes for our real good, and tends to the enjoyment of the ſupreme good: to eat and drink, not becauſe we are hungry or thirſty, becauſe the appetite deſires it, but with reference to the main end,

with reſpect to the higheſt good, that the body may be enabled, ſtrengthened and quickened to wait upon the ſoul chearfully in the actions of a holy life. But this man, in his animal ſtate cannot perfectly attain to, which ſhews that the appetite doth keep us at a diſtance from God.

3. The *Fancy*; this alſo keeps a man at a diſtance from God, and hinders us in the knowledge and ſervice of God, and interrupts the ſouls communion with God. This is a buſie and petulant faculty, or inward ſenſe, and the ſoul doth readily ſenſate the paſſions of it, ſo that it doth frequently hinder its mental operations, and becomes a great ſnare. A working fancy (how much ſoever it is magnified by the wiſdom of this world) is a mighty ſnare to the ſoul, except it work in a fellowſhip with right reaſon, and a ſanctified heart: I am perſwaded there is no greater burden in the world to a ſerious ſoul, eſpecially in hot and dry conſtitutions, where it is commonly moſt pregnant, and moſt impatient of diſcipline. And, I confeſs, I have often wondred

wondred at the ſouls readineſs to be ſo ſpeedily affected with the phantaſms and imaginations of it, and fondneſs to hug them ſo dearly. This indeed, if it be ſo far refined, as to preſent ſober and ſolid imaginations to the mind, and to act in ſubſervience to ſanctified reaſon, is an excellent handmaid to the ſoul in many of her functions: But otherwiſe is a ſnare, as we have partly obſerved already, and may obſerve more, if we ſtudy the ſecrets of our own ſouls, and the mighty myſteries that are within us. And this doth not only ordinarily diſturb, diſtract and hinder in ordinary duties, but even when the ſoul is at the higheſt pitch of communion and contemplation, it aſſayes to pull it down to attend to its vain phantaſms; and indeed gives it many a grievous fall. I doubt not to affirm, that this is the moſt pernicious enemy of the three that I named to the ſouls happineſs, as might appear in many reſpects; I will only name one: It hath an advantage againſt us, which neither of the other two hath: It infeſts us, and annoys

us ſleeping as well as waking. In ſleep, the ſenſes are lockt up, and the appetite is, for the moſt part, ſilent from its begging; but then the fancy is as buſie and tumultuous as ever, forming and gathering imaginations, and thoſe are commonly wild and ſenſleſs, if not worſe. The mind, in way of kindneſs and benevolence to the body, ſuſpends its own actings, whilſt the body takes its reſt in the night, and then the rude fancy takes its opportunity to wander at liberty, as being without its keeper, and acts to the diſturbance of the body; but that's not the worſt, for it becomes ſo tumultuous and impetuous ſometimes, as that it awakens the mind to attend upon its imaginations; and this the Soul doth condeſcend to in an inordinate manner, and ſets the ſtamp of ſinfulneſs upon them, to its own wounding. And now that I am ſpeaking of ſleep as a *Mauſſa* to this diſcourſe, I cannot but obſerve how this very thing alſo keeps us at a diſtance from God, in this animal ſtate. How is our communion with God interrupted by this! For herein

herein we ceaſe, not only from the actions of an animal life, but commonly from the actions of a ſpiritual life too. What a great breach, what a ſad interciſion is there made in our converſe with God by this means! Such a poor happineſs it is, that we have in this world, that it is cut off, and ſeems as it were, not to be one fourth part of our time: For indeed a happineſs that is not felt, deſerves not the name of happineſs. Some learned and active men have been aſhamed that they have ſlept away ſo much of their time, which was all too little for their ſtudies and exploits: Ah poor Chriſtian, that, as it were, ſleeps away ſo much of his God, being as much eſtranged from him in the night, as though he had never converſed with him in the day, and in the morning when he awakes, cannot alwaies find himſelf with him neither; which is enough to make a poor Saint wiſh, either that he might have no need of ſleep, or that with the amourous Spouſe, *Cant.* 5. 2. *Though he ſleep, his heart might wake perpetually.*

We have seen in what sense this mortal body keeps Believers absent from the Lord, and in what respect it keeps them at a distance from God, even in this life, from the *Knowledge* of God, the *Service* of God, and *Communion* with him. Here then by way of Application;

1. We may see that it was for good reason that the blessed Apostle is confident and willing to depart; nay, he groans within himself, desiring that *mortality might be swallowed up of life*, as he speaks, *vers.* 4. I told you before, that these words did contain the reason or ground thereof; and by this time I hope you see that the reason is good; and the ground is sufficient: What will the men of this world say? Will you perswade us out of our life? Should any thing in the world make a man weary of his life? *Praestat miserum esse quàm non esse*: The Apostle was sure besides himself, or he would never have fallen out with his own life: or else he was in a passion, and knew not what he said: or else his life was bitter to him, by reason of the poor, afflicted, persecuted

perſecuted condition that he lived in, and ſo he was become deſperate, and cared not what became of him. No, none of theſe: The Apoſtle was in his right wits, and in a ſober mind too. It was not a paſſion, or a fit of melancholly, but his judgment and choice upon good deliberation; and therefore you find him in the ſame mind elſewhere, *Phil.* 1. 23. *I deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.* Beſides, he gives a reaſon for what he deſires; now we know that paſſion is unruly and unreaſonable. Neither was the Apoſtle beſides himſelf; for he gives a good, ſolid and wiſe reaſon ——— *Whilſt we are at home in the body, &c.* He will part with his life, rather than not be perfectly happy. For, whereas worldlings put ſuch a high price upon life, and think that nothing ſhould perſwade men out of their lives: It's true indeed, if we ſpeak Properly, life is the perfection of the creature: The happineſs of every thing is it's life: *A living Dog is better than a dead Lion,* Eccleſ. 9. 4. But I may ſay to theſe, even as our Saviour ſaid

ſaid to that woman; in *Joh.* 4. 18. concerning her Husband; The life that we live here, is not our life. The union of the ſenſitive ſoul with the Body, is indeed truly and properly the life of a beaſt, and its greateſt happineſs; for it is capable of no higher perfection: But the union of the rational Soul with God, is the nobleſt perfection of man, and his higheſt life: ſo that the life of a believing ſoul is not deſtroyed at death, but perfected. Neither was the Apoſtle weary of his life, becauſe of the adverſities of it. The Apoſtle was of a braver ſpirit ſure than any Stoick; he durſt live, though he rather deſired to dye. All the conflicts he endured with the world, never wrung ſuch a ſigh from him, as the conflict that he had with his own corruptions did, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched man*, &c. All the perſecutions in the world never made him groan ſo much, as the burden of his fleſh doth here, and his great diſtance from the Lord. A godly ſoul can converſe with perſecuting men, and a tempting Divil can handle briars and

thorns,

thorns, can grapple with any kind of oppreſſions and adverſities in the fleſh without deſpondency, ſo long as it finds it ſelf in the boſom of God, and in the arms of Omnipotence. But when it begins to conſider where it is, how far it is from its God, its life, and the happy ſtate that God hath prepared it for, then it cannot but groan within it ſelf, and be ready with *Peter*, to caſt it ſelf out of the ſhip, to get to its God; to land it ſelf in eternity. Neither indeed (to ſpeak truly) is it only the ſenſe of ſin againſt God, which ſets the godly ſoul a going: For, though it muſt be confeſt, that this is a heavy burden upon the ſoul, yet the Apoſtle makes no complaint of this here, but only of his diſtance from God, that neceſſary diſtance from God that the body kept him at.

2. See here the excellent ſpirit of true Religion. Godly ſouls do groan after an unbodyed eſtate, not only becauſe of their ſins in the body, but even becauſe of the neceſſary diſtance at which the body keeps them from God. We may ſuppoſe a godly

ſoul

ſoul at ſome time to have no manner of affliction in the world to grieve him, no ſin unpardoned, unrepented of to trouble him; yet for all this he is not at perfect reſt; he is burdened and groans within himſelf, becauſe he is at ſuch a diſtance from that abſolute good, whom he longs to know more familiarly, and enjoy more fully than he doth yet, or than is allowed to mortal men: And though nothing elſe ayl him, yet the conſideration of this diſtance makes him cry out, *Oh when ſhall I come and appear before God!* be wholly ſwallowed up in him, ſee him as he is, and converſe with him, face to face. Bare innocency, or freedom from ſin, cannot ſatisfie that noble and large ſpirit that is in a truly and Godlike ſoul; but that ſpirit of true goodneſs (being nothing elſe but an efflux from God himſelf) carries the ſoul out after a more intimate union with that Being from whence it came: God dwelling in the ſoul, doth by a ſecret mighty power draw the ſoul more and more to himſelf. In a word, a godly ſoul that is really touch-

with

with the ſenſe of divine ſweetneſs and fulneſs, and impreſt with divine goodneſs and holineſs, as the wax is with the ſtamp of the ſeal, could not be content to dwell for ever in this kind of animal body, nor take up an eternal reſt in this imperfect mixed ſtate, though it could converſe with the world without a ſinful ſullying of it ſelf; but muſt needs endeavour ſtill a cloſer conjunction with God; and leaving the chaſe of all other objects, pant and breath not only after God alone, but after more and more of him; and not only when it is under the ſenſe of ſin, but moſt of all when it is under the moſt powerful influences of divine grace and love, cry out with *Paul*, Oh, *who will deliver me out of this body?*

3. Suffer me from hence to expoſtulate a little, to expoſtulate with Chriſtian ſouls about their unſeemly temper. Doth this animal life, and mortal body, keep us at ſuch a diſtance from our God, our happineſs? Why, are we then ſo fond of this life and mixed ſtate? Why do we ſo pamper

this

this body? Why so anxiously studious to keep it up, so dreadfully afraid of the ruins of it? If we take the Apostles words in the first sense that I named, then I may ask with him in the first verse; *Know we not, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we had a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens?* or *vers.* 8. Why are we not willing rather to be *absent from the body*, and to be *present with the Lord?* If we take them in the latter sense, as this animal body is an hindrance to the souls knowledge of, and communion with God, Then I ask concerning this, as the Apostle doth concerning rich men, *James* 2. 6. Why do ye pamper, prize, honour, dote upon this body? Doth not this body oppress you, distract you, burden you, clog you, hinder you? Doth not this body interpose between the *Sun of Righteousness*, between the *Father of Lights*, and your souls, that should shine with a light and glory borrowed from him; even as the dark body of the earth interposes between the Sun and Moon,

Moon, to eclipse its light? Why are we not rather weary, that we are in the body? Surely there are some objections, some impediments to the souls longing after its happy state, which I shall come to anon: But I doubt also, that there is something that chains the soul to this animal life, some cords in this earthly tabernacle, that tye up the soul in it: But I cannot well imagine what they should be. Say not, There is something of God to be enjoyed in this life, which makes it pleasant: For, although this be true, yet I am sure God gives nothing of himself to a soul, thereby to clog it or cloy it. Did *Moses* send for some Clusters of the Land of *Canaan* into the Wilderness, think ye, that the people might see and taste the fruits, and sit still, and be satisfied, and say, Oh it is enough; we see that there are pleasant things in that Land, we will never come at it? or, did he not do it rather that they might make the more haste to possess themselves of it? Will any man say, Away, I will have no more land, no more money, I have some already?

already? Can a godly soul say, God hath given me an earnest, I desire no more? No, no, but the report that a Christian hears of a rest remaining, a happy live remaining for it, and the chariots of divine graces that he sees God hath sent out into his soul to convey it thither, make him cry out, not with *Jacob*, *Gen.* 45. 28. *It is enough Joseph my Son is yet alive, I will go and see him before I dye:* But oh this is not enough, this report is not enough; it is not enough that I taste some of the good things of the Land; It is not enough that I see these carriages sent out for me; it is not enough that my soul hath an happy and honourable life prepared for it; I see it indeed before I dye, but I will also dye, that I may see it better and enjoy it more. But I doubt there is some earthly tye, even upon the heavenly soul that chains it to the present animal body: But, sure I am that whatsoever it is, it is but a weak one. Is there any worldly accommodation, any creature-toy, that should in reason step between a Soul and

God? Is this life ſweet, becauſe there are creature comforts to be enjoyed? And will it not be a better life, when creature-comforts ſhall not be needed? And are the pleaſures of this body, the comforts of this life, the flattering ſmiles, or fawning embraces of the creature, ſuch a mighty contentment to a ſoul, to a ſoul acquainted with the higheſt good? Haſt thou, O my ſoul, any ſuch full and ſatisfying entertainment in thy Pilgrimage, as to make thee loth to go home? Wilt thou hide thy ſelf with *Saul* among the *ſtuff*, among the lumber of the world, when thou art ſought for to be crowned? Are the empty ſounds of popular applauſe, the breaking bubbles of ſecular greatneſs, the ſhallow ſtreams of ſenſual pleaſures, the ſmiling dalliance, and liſping eloquence of wives and children, the flying ſhadows of creature-refreſhments, the momentary flouriſhes of worldly beauty and bravery, are theſe meat for a ſoul? Are theſe the proper object, or the main happineſs of ſuch a divine thing, as an immortal ſoul? Why are we

not

not rather weary of this body, that makes us so weary of heavenly employment? Why do we not rather long to part with that life, that parts us from our life? And instead of the young Apostles, *It is good to be here*, cry out with the sweet Singer, *O that one would give me the wings of a Dove, that I may fly away and be at rest!*

And now methinks, by this time, I might be somewhat bold, and form my remaining discourse into an Exhortation. But, it may be, you will not bear it all at once; therefore I will first begin with a Dehortation, to dissuade from two evils concerning your body, *viz. Fear* and *Fondness*.

1. Take heed of *Fear* for the body. I speak not so much of those first impressions which our fancies and animal spirits do make upon our minds (though it were to be wished, that the mind did not so much as once sensate or entertain these) but of those acts of the will, whereby it doth receive, allow, cherish these impressions, until the Cockatrice egge be hatch-

into a Viper. I speak not against *care* and circumspection; no nor against that kind of suspicion, whereby wise and prudent persons are jealous of circumstances and events, and so do watch to prevent, remove, or manage bodily evils, which is called Fear: though even in these there may be an extream, a *fear where no fear is*, Psal. 53. 5. which is there ascribed to the wicked, and elsewhere threatned as a judgment, *Lev.* 26. 36. *The sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them*, Deut. 28. 65. *The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart*: There is a *prudent man who foreseeth the evil and hideth himself*, Prov. 22. 3. But there are also many fools that hide themselves, though they see no evil. But I am not speaking of these: There is a vast difference between *Care* and *Fear*. By *Fear*, I mean that trembling, fluctuating, tormenting passion, that doth not suffer the heart to be at rest, but doth, as it were, unhinge it, and loosen the joynts of the soul, whether it break out into expressions or no: It clouds

clouds the understanding, unsettles the will, disordereth the affections, confounds the memory, and is like an Earthquake in the soul, taking it off from its own basis, destroying the consistency of it, and hurling all the faculties into confusion: This whether it break out into any unseemly acts or no (which commonly it doth) is in it self an unseemly temper for a wise man, much more for a godly. I might speak as a Philosopher, and shew how unbecoming a man, and how destructive to him this passion is; so much, that whilst it doth predominate, it almost robs him of that which is his greatest glory, even reason it self. But, to say no worse of it, it is very opposite, if not contrary to that noble grace of Faith, whereby the steady soul resteth and lodgeth in the arms of God, as in its center. But to speak to the thing in hand, what an unseemly passion is this? we would have the world to believe that we have layed up our happiness in God, and that we are troubled that we are so far from him, and yet we are afraid lest that should

be taken out of the way that keeps us at a diſtance from him: We flatter our ſelves that we are in haſte for Heaven, and yet we are dreadfully afraid leſt our rubs ſhould be taken out of the way. How do theſe things hang together? Are we perſwaded, that if this earthly houſe of our tabernacle were taken down, we have a building not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens? If not, Why do we yet call our ſelves Chriſtians? But I think I may take it for granted, we are all ſo perſwaded: And if ſo, Why are we ſo afraid it ſhould be taken down? I am loth to ſpeak what I think; yet methinks the entire and ardent love which we either do bear, or ought to bear to the Bleſſed God, and union and communion with him, ſhould caſt out this fear: This is ſuitable to Scripture, 1 *Joh.* 4. 18. I will not diſpute how far ſinful fear for the body may carry a godly ſoul; the further, the worſe I am ſure: But if any will needs be ſo indulgent to his own paſſions, and ſo much an enemy to his own peace, as to encourage himſelf

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to fear (which is a strange thing) from the example of *Abraham*, denying his wife; or *Peter*, denying his Lord; let him compare the issue, and then let me see whether he dare go and do like wise: But if that will not fright you from fear, chew upon these two Considerations.

1. I pray you seriously dispute the matter with your selves, how far fear of sickness and death may consist with the ardent thirst after union and perfect communion with the Blessed God, with which we ought to be possest.

2. Dispute seriously how far it can stand with the sincerity of a Christian. God hath not left us in the dark, as to this matter: I will turn you to a Text or two, which methinks, should strike cold to all slavish trembling Professors. *Prov.* 28. 1. *Job* 15. 20, 21. *The wicked travelleth with pain all his days, a dreadful sound is in his ears*: They are the words of *Eliphaz* indeed, but they do agree with the words of God himself, *Isa.* 33. 14. *The sinners in* Sion *are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the hypocrites*: When I read over these Texts

I cannot

I cannot but pray, and cry, O my Soul, come not you into the number of the wicked, and be not united into the assembly of Hypocrites!

2. Take heed of *fondness* of the body: of a double act of it, *priding*, *pampering*.

1. Take heed you pride not your selves in any excellencies of the body. Doth this mortal body keep us at a distance from our God? Do we well then to love that which keeps us from that which is most lovely? Why do we stand fondly gazing upon that which keeps us from the blessed sight of God? If you ask me, Did ever any man hate his own flesh? I will ask you again, Did ever any wise man love his own flesh above him that made it? Did ever any godly Soul love his body in opposition to his God? Oh, but it is a comely body! And what is a beautiful body, but a fair Prison? A silver twist, or a clog of gold, do as really hinder the flight of a Bird, and forestal her liberty, as a stone tyed at her heels. Nay, those very excellencies which you so much admire, are so much the greater hinderances. If we had learned that

excellent leſſon indeed, of enjoying all things only in God, then the ſeveral beauties and braveries of the body, would be a help to our devotion, they would carry us up to an admiration and contemplation of that glorious and moſt excellent Being, from whom they were communicated: ſo we might (in ſome ſenſe) look into a glaſs, and behold the beauty of God. But (alas!) theſe commonly prove the greater ſnares: Many had been more beautiful within, had they been leſs beautiful without; more chaſte, if leſs comely; many had been more peaceable, and more at peace too, if they had been leſs able to have quarrelled and fought. It was ſaid of *Galba*, who was an ingenious man, but deformed, that his Soul dwelt ill: but, ſure I am, it might better have been ſo ſaid of beautiful *Abſolom*, or *Jezabel*, whoſe bodies became a ſnare to their ſouls. On the other hand, they that want a beauty in their bodies, will perhaps labour to find an excellency in their minds far beyond it; as the Philoſopher adviſed

to

to look often into a glass, *ut si deformis sit, corrigas formositate morum*, &c.

2. Take heed of *pampering* the body, of treating it too gently and delicately. Deny it nothing that may fit it for the service of God and your souls, and allow it no more than may do that. Thy pampering is, 1. *Unseemly*: What, make a darling of that which keeps us from our Lord! carry it gently, and delicately, and tenderly towards that, which whilst we carry about with us we cannot be happy! 2. *Injurious*: If you bring up this *servant* delicately from a child, you shall have him become your *Son* at length, yea, your Master. If you do by your bodies, as the fond King did by his Son *Adonijah*, 1 *King.* 1. 6. never displease it, never reprove it, never deny it; it will do with you in time as he did, raise seditions in your soul. Go on and please, and pamper, and cocker your bodies, and it will come to this at length, that you must deny them nothing; you must *give* whatsoever a whining appetite will crave, *go* whither your gadding senses will carry you,

and *speak* whatsoever wanton fancy will suggest. Doth not the body it self set us at a sufficient distance from God; but we must estrange our selves more from him by pleasuring it, spend the time that should be for God, in decking, trimming, adorning it? When you cram this, you feed a Bird that will pick out your eyes; you nourish a Traitor, when you gratifie this *Adonijah*. In a word, Is it not enough that we do all carry fire in our bosoms, but we must also blow it up into a flame? *Nay, my Brethren, do not so foolishly.*

And now, methinks, by this time, I may venture upon an Exhortation; by degrees at least.

1. *Watch against the body.* You have heard how the senses, appetite and fancy become a snare to the souls living unto, and conversing with God: Now then, if you seriously design communion with Heaven, if you place your happiness in the knowledge and enjoyment of that supream and eternal good, it becomes you to watch against all things that may distract or

divert you from it, or make you fall short of the glory of God. Men that live upon earthly designs, whose great ambition it is to be great in the world, do not only use the most effectual means, and take the most direct courses to accomplish those designs, and attain those ends, but do continually suspect, and diligently watch against all the moths that would corrupt, the rust that would consume, the thieves that would plunder their treasures; and in a word, against all possible hinderances, defraudations, and disappointments: So will we suspect and watch sure against all enemies and traitors to our souls, if we live here upon eternal designs, if our ambition be to be great in God alone. And the more eminent the danger is, the more will we watch. Have you not found by experience, which of these three have been most prejudicial to your communion with God? If not, you have not been so studious to know the state, nor pursue the happiness of your own souls as you might; If so, then watch against that most of all, which you have found to

be moſt injurious. For it ordinarily comes to paſs, either by the difference of conſtitutions, or difference of temptations; or different waies of living, or ſome other thing, that Gods children are more enſnared by ſome one of theſe than other. Well, be ſure to watch and pray, and ſtrive more eſpecially againſt the more eſpecial enemies of your ſouls.

2. *Live above the body*: above bodily enjoyments, ornaments, excellencies. Though theſe bodily enjoyments be never ſo ſweet, theſe bodily ornaments never ſo glorious, yet is not your happineſs in theſe. Certainly they live to their loſs, who live upon the excellencies of their own ſouls, whether natural or ſupernatural; they deprive themſelves of the infinite glory, fulneſs and ſufficiency that is in the Bleſſed God, who take up their happineſs in theſe: Much more do they pinch and impoveriſh their own ſouls, who live upon bodily ornaments, or excellencies; wherein many inferiour creatures do excel them; the Roſe in beauty, the Sun in brightneſs, the Lion in

ſtrength,

strength, the Stagg in swiftness, &c. If a woman were as lovely as the morning, *fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun*: if a man were full of personal grace and majesty, *terrible as an Army with banners*; yet were not their happiness in these accomplishments. Nay, which is worse, these ornaments stand between us and our happiness. When you begin therefore at any time fondly to admire any of these bodily excellencies, then think with your selves, Oh but all these do not make my Soul happy: Nay, this beautifull outside must stink, and be deformed; these fair and flourishing members must wither in the dust; this active, strong and graceful body, must be buryed in disgrace and weakness, before I can attain to entire and perfect happiness. This consideration will advance us to live above the body.

3. *Be content to be unbodyed for a time.* Is it true, that we can no otherwise be happy, no otherwise be present with God, know him familiarly, enjoy him perfectly and entirely? cannot we get to him, except

we go thorow the dust? Be it so then, be content to be unbodied for a time. *Occidat modò imperet*, could the Heathen say concerning her Son; much rather may a Christian say concerning his Father, Let him slay me, so my Soul may but reign with him, which is by his reigning in it; Let him kill me, so he will but fill me; Let him draw me thorow the dust of the earth, so he will but draw me out of this dust of the world, so he will but draw me nigh unto himself, and bring me into a full and inseparable conjunction with my Lord! Methinks I need not use many arguments to perswade a Soul that is feelingly overpowered, mastered, ravished with the infinite beauty, goodness, glory and fulness of his God, to be willing to quit a dusty tabernacle for a time, wherein he is almost swallowed up, to depart, and to be entirely swallowed up in him. Nay, suppose a Christian in the lowest form, who hath but chosen God for his highest good and only happiness (as every sincere Christian hath) methinks he should have learnt this lesson, to

comply

comply with that infinite, perfect will, that governs both him and the whole world: I cannot conceive a godly ſoul without the ſubduing of ſelf-will; nor ſuppoſe a ſincere Saint void at leaſt of the habit of ſelf-reſignation. Therefore I will add no more concerning this, but riſe a ſtep higher.

4. *Long after an unbodied ſtate*, deſire to depart, and to be with the Lord, groan within your ſelves to have mortality ſwallowed up of life; in which temper you find the holy Apoſtle. To be *content* to dye, is a good temper, a temper ſcarce to be found (I think) in any wicked man? not from a right principle, I am ſure; But, methinks, it's no very great thing in compariſon of what we ſhould labour to attain to. Think on't a little; what a ſtrange kind of cold uncouth phraſe it is, Such a man is content to be happy! Men are not ſaid to be content to be rich, but covetous, not willing to be honoured but *ambitious*: And why ſhould it only be content to be with God? I am perſwaded there is no ſhew nor ſemblance

blance of ſatisfactory bliſs and happineſs for a ſoul, a noble immortal nature, but only in the ſupreme eſſential, perfect, abſolute good, the bleſſed and eternal good; And ſhould not this noble active Being be carried out with vehement longings, after its proper and full happineſs, as well as this earthly ſluggiſh body is carried with reſtleſs appetite after health, and ſafety, and liberty? Why ſhould a ſoul alone be content not to be happy, when all other things in the world, do ſo ardently court, and vehemently purſue their reſpective ends, and ſeveral perfections? Certainly if the bleſſed and glorious God ſhould diſplay himſelf in all his beauty, and open all his infinite treaſures of goodneſs, and ſweetneſs, and fulneſs within the view of a ſoul, it could not but be raviſhed with the object, earneſtly preſs into his preſence, *ruere in amplexus*, and with a holy impatience throw it ſelf into his arms. There would be need of ſetting bounds to the Mount, to keep it from breaking thorow unto the Lord: what is ſaid of the Queen of the South, when

ſhe

she had heard the wisdom, and seen the glory of *Solomon*, 2 *Chron.* 9. 4 would be more true of a Christian, there would be *no more spirit left* in him. Some have therefore observed the wisdom of God in engaging the Soul in so dear a union with the body, that it might care for it, and not quit it: Yea the Heathen observed the wisdom of God in concealing the happy state of a separated Soul, that so men might be content to live out their time, *victuros que Dii celant, ut vivere durent, Felix esse mori.* But alas, we see but darkly as thorow a glass, and our affections towards God are proportionable to our apprehensions of him, these are dark, and therefore those are dull. And oh would to God they were but indeed proportionable! for then we should love him only, if not earnestly, and desire him entirely, if not sufficiently. Consider what I have hinted, concerning the happiness of the Soul in the enjoyment of God, and what I have more fully demonstrated concerning the bodies hindering of it, and keeping it at a distance, and then

argue,

argue, Is happineſs the main end of every Being? Muſt not this Soul then being a noble and immortal nature, needs look out for ſome high and noble happineſs, ſuitable to its excellent ſelf? Can that be any where, but in the enjoyment of the higheſt and uncreated good? And can this never be attained whilſt we are in this animal ſtate, in this mortal body, that keeps at ſuch a diſtance? Oh why then do we not look out after ſo much enjoyment of this bleſſed God, as we are now capable of, and long after a departure hence, that we may enjoy him freely and fully, and be eternally happy in him! Oh be not only content, but even covetous.

But what, ſhall the Soul break the cage that ſhe may take her flight? God forbid! How can he pretend to be a lover of God, who is not formed into his will, ſubject to his ordination, content to abide in the ſtation that he hath allotted him? But if we may not break it to eſcape, yet methinks it may be ſafe enough, with ſubmiſſion to wiſh it were broken: If we may not with

with *Saul*, *dissolve* our selves, yet with *Paul* we may *desire to be dissolved*. The perfection that the most Christians attain to, is but to *desire to live*, and be *content to dye*: Oh, consider what I have said in this matter, and invert the order of those words in your hearts, *Be content to live, desire to dye.*

But what, would you have us pray for death? *Answer*: I speak not of a formal praying either for one or other. What the Apostle speaks of the greatest of sins, 1 *Joh.* 5. 16. I am ready to say of this state of freedom from all sin, *I do not say that ye should pray for it.* You will tell me that *David* and *Hezekiah* prayed for life: And I could tell you that *Elijah* prayed for death, 1 *King.* 19. 5. he was indeed *a man subject to passions*, James 5. 17. but I believe this was none of them. But I will not enveigle my self in any controversie: Methinks the sad consideration laid before your eyes, whilest we are in the body, we are absent, distant from the Lord, should wring out an *O wretched man that I am, &c.* or an *I desire to be dissolved*; or if not words, yet at

least

leſt a groan after immortality, with our Apoſtle here —— *We groan within our ſelves, that mortality may be ſwallowed up of life.*

But can a Soul poſſibly long for the *deſtruction* of the body? Philoſophy indeed tells us that it cannot. Be it ſo: yet I'm ſure Divinity teaches, that a Soul may long after the redemption of the body; the redemption of it from this kind of animal, corruptible, enſnaring condition that it is now in. *Rom.* 8. 23 —— *We groan within our ſelves, waiting for the redemption of our body.* If we cannot wiſh to be *unclouthed*, yet we may long to be *clouthed upon*, *verſ.* 4. of this chapter: At leaſt, methinks, the Heathen ſhould not out-do us, who could ſay, *Mori nolo, ſed me mortuum eſſe nihil curo.*

But, will all cry, Oh if we were ſure of an intereſt in Chriſt, of pardon of ſin, of truth of grace, of eternal life, then we could freely leave all. *Anſw.*

2. That is, you would live to be more holy before you dye: you are not yet holy enough. No, nor never ſhall be till you dye. If you long after holineſs, long

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to be with God then; for that is a state of perfect holiness. To desire to live, upon pretence of being more holy, is a meer fallacy, a contradiction. But, it may be, this is not the meaning of the Objection: Therefore,

2. A not having of what we would have, is not an excuse for not doing what we should do. It is our duty to rejoyce in the Lord *Phil.* 4. 4. which our not having of assurance, doth not except us from; though, if we have assurance, we might indeed rejoyce the more. But to take off this plea at once.

3. Our earnest longings after a full and perfect enjoyment of God, and so our breathings after an immortal state doth not depend upon our assurance; but indeed assurance rather depends upon that. I doubt we are commonly mistaken in the nature of assurance; and, it may be, are in a wrong manner curious about the *signs* of Christs *appearing* in our souls. For, certainly a well grounded assurance of the love of God, doth most discover and unfold it self in the growth of true

true godlineſs in the ſoul; Now the love of God, and an earneſt deſire to be like unto him, and to be with him, is the better half of all religion. *Mat.* 22. 37, 38. ſo that it rather ſeems that aſſurance ſprings up from this frame of ſoul, than that this ariſes out of aſſurance. If aſſurance be the thing that you deſire, get your ſouls joyned to God in an union of affections, will, and ends, and then labour and long to be cloſer to him, liker to him, perfectly holy and happy in him, and be ye aſſured that Chriſt is in you of a truth: For theſe mighty works which he hath wrought, theſe divine breathings, theſe holy pantings after him do bear witneſs of him.

4. Whether ever you come to that feeling knowledge, that powerful ſenſe of your ſtate or no, which you call aſſurance, yet know, that it is your duty to long after immortality. We are wont to call aſſurance the priviledge of ſome few, but the Scriptures make this temper that I am ſpeaking of, the duty of all Believers, which I do the rather name, becauſe I find few Profeſſors of this temper;

per; and indeed but few that are willing to believe that they ought to be. Our Saviour calls all Believers to as much in effect, as I do, *Luk.* 21. 28. *Look up, and lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh*: whereby is not meant a bare posture and speculation, but joy and longing are required by that phrase, say the Dutch Annotat. See also *Rev.* 22. 17. Consider further (which, methinks, should strike cold to the hearts of cold-hearted Professors) that this very temper is made one of the greatest characters of true and sincere Saints: I do not know of any one ofther named; See *Rom.* 8. 23. *We groan within our selves, waiting for the redemption of our body*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. *The Lord shall give the Crown to them that love his appearing*, Tit. 2. 13. We should live godly in this present world, *looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. 3. 12. What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, *looking for, and hastening to the coming of*

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the day of God! Jude 21. Keep you
ſelves in the love of God, *looking fo*
the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt un
to eternal life. Do all theſe plain and
pathetical Scriptures ſtand for cypher
in your eye? Methinks they ſhoul
not. But not to ſtand upon the proo
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Christ, as he concerning her, *Cant.* 6. 12. *Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of* Aminadab. And every godly soul may in some degree say with that Spouse, *Cant.* 5. 4, 5. *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the dore, and my bowels were moved for him: I rose up*, &c. Tell me, friends, How can Divine Grace, that Well of living water in the soul, chuse but spring up into eternal life? *John* 4. 14. I doubt not to affirm, that that which is of God in the soul, must needs carry the soul after God, as it belongs to Heaven, so it will be longing towards Heaven. That which is of a divine original, must needs have a divine tendency; that which is of divine *extraction*, will have in it a divine *attraction*, and pursue a divine *perfection*, *Col.* 3. 1. That divine life and spirit that runs thorow godly souls, doth awaken and exalt in some measure all the powers of them into an active and chearful sympathy with that absolute good that renders them compleatly blessed. Holiness and purity of heart will be attracting God more and more

to

to it self; and the more pure our souls are, and the more separate from earthly things, the more earnestly will they endeavour the neerest union that may be with God: and so by consequence, methinks they must needs in some sense desire the removal of that animal life, and dark body that stands in their way; for they know that that which now letteth, will let (such is the unchangeable nature of it, till it be laid in the dust) till it be taken out of the way. The thirsty King did but cry for water of the Well of *Bethlehem*, and his Champions broke thorow the Host of the Philistims, and fetcht it, 2 *Sam.* 23. 15. And will ye not allow the thirsty soul, if not to *break thorow* to fetch it, yet at least to *break out* into an *Oh that one would give me to drink* of the living water, of the fountain of grace, and peace, and love! Will ye allow hunger to break down *stone-walls?* and will you neither allow the hungry soul to break down these *mud-walls?* nor to wish within it self that they were broken down? In a word then, give me leave earnestly to pre-

you

you to an earneſt preſſing after perfect fruition of, and eternal converſe with God, and to change the Apoſtles words, *Heb.* 12. 1. Seeing we are compaſſed about with ſo great a divine light, and glory, and brightneſs, let us be willing and deſirous to lay aſide this weight of fleſh, and this body that ſo eaſily reſiſts us with ſins and ſnares, and run with eagerneſs to the object that is ſet before us. *Amen. Amen.*

Draw me, we will run after thee.

THE

THE Angelical Life.

MAT. 22. 30.

——*Are as the Angels of God in Heaven.*

THE Doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the great things of Christian Religion, as they were accounted a strange thing by all the world, when they were first publisht and preacht: so indeed by none less entertained, or rather more opposed, than by the wisest of men living in that age, *viz. Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees*; who were the *disputers of this world*, as the Apostles phrase is, 1 *Cor.* 1. 20. A thing of wonderful observation,

tion, not only to us in our day, but even to our bleſſed Lord himſelf in the days of his fleſh, who fetches the cauſe of it from Heaven, and adores the infinite Wiſdom of God in it, *Mat.* 11. 25. Amongſt other ſet Diſputations that the Sadducees held with our Saviour, this in this Chapter is very famous; where they diſpute againſt the Reſurrection of the dead, by an argument fetcht *ab abſurdo*, *verſ.* 25. grounded upon an inſtance of a woman that had been married to ſeven Husbands ſucceſſively: Now, ſay they, if there be a Reſurrection, whoſe Wife ſhall ſhe be then? our Saviour anſwers by deſtroying the ground of their argument, and ſhewing that they diſputed upon a falſe ſuppoſition: for, ſaith he, *In the Reſurrection there ſhall be no marrying*, but men ſhall be as the Angels of God. In which words this Doctrine is plainly laid down (for I ſhall not meddle with the Controverſie.)

Doct. *That the glorified Saints ſhall be as the Angels of God in Heaven.*

The other Evangeliſts do lay down the ſame

ſame truth, as you may find, *Mark* 12. 25. *Luk.* 20. 36. In the explication of which point, I will ſhew, 1. *Negatively*, wherein the Saints ſhall not be like the Angels. 2. *Affirmatively*, wherein they ſhall be like unto them, or as Saint *Luke* hath it, *equal* to them.

1. *Negatively. The glorified Saints ſhall not be like the Angels in eſſence.* The Angelical eſſence, and the rational Soul are, and ſhall be different. Souls ſhall remain Souls ſtill, keep their own eſſence: The eſſence ſhall not be changed, Souls ſhall not be changed into Angelical eſſences.

2. *They ſhall not be wholly ſpirits without bodies*, as the Angels: The ſpirits of juſt men now made perfect, are more like to the Angels in this ſenſe, than they ſhall be after the Reſurrection: For now they are ſpirits without bodies; but the Saints ſhall have bodies; not ſuch as now (ſo corruptible, ſo crazy) not in any thing defective, not needing creature-ſupplies; But incorruptible, glorious bodies, in ſome ſenſe Spiritual bodies; which are

deſcribed

described by three characters, 1 *Cor.* 15. 42, 43. *Incorruptible* (somewhat more than immortal) *glorious*, *powerful*. Neither doth their having bodies any whit abate of their perfection or glory, nor render them inferior to the Angels: for even the glorious Redeemer of the world hath a body, who is yet superior to the Angels; and he shall change the vile bodies of the Saints, and make them like unto his glorious body, *Phil.* 3. *ult.*

4. Neither have we any ground to believe that the Saints shall be altogether *equal to the Angels in dignity and glory*: But rather, that as man was at first made a little lower than the Angels, so that he shall never come to be exalted altogether so high as they; for it seemeth, that the natural capacity of an Angel, is greater than of a man; and so shall continue, for they are distinct kinds of creatures. As a beast cannot become so wise and intelligent as a man; for then he would cease to be a beast: so neither can a man become so large and capable as an Angel; for then he would cease to be a man.

2. *Affirmatively*, The glorified Saints shall be like the Angels of God in Hea-

ven; first, In their *qualities*; that is,

1. In being *pure and holy*; whether they shall be equal to them in positive holiness, or no, I know not: whether they shall understand, and know, and love God, in all degrees, as much as the Angels; It seems rather that they shall not; because, as I said before, their capacity shall not be so large. But if in this they be not altogether equal to the Angels, yet it implies no imperfection: for they shall be positively holy as far as their nature is capable; and so shall be perfect in their kind, *Heb.* 12. 23. *The spirits of Just men made perfect:* They shall in this be like unto the Angels, if not equal to them; yea like unto God himself in it; *Be ye holy as I am holy*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 15. *Mat.* 5. *ult* But as to negative holiness, the Saints shall be even equal to the Angels of God in Heaven, *i. e.* they shall have no more sin, no more corruption than they have. They shall be as perfectly freed from all iniquities, imperfections, and infirmities, as the Angels. What can be cleaner than that which hath no uncleanness at all in it? Why, so clean shall all the Saints be, *Rev.* 21. 27. *No unclean thing shall enter into*

into Heaven. They ſhall be without all kind of *ſpot or blemiſh*, Epheſ. 5. 27. which is a perfect negative holineſs: more cannot be ſaid of the Angels in this reſpect. As branches of this,

2. As the holy Angels do reverence the Divine Majeſty, *Iſa.* 6. 2, 3. they cover their faces with their wings, crying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Hoſts; ſo ſhall the glorified Saints. You may ſee what ſweet harmony they make, conſenting together to give all the glory of all to God, *Rev.* 7. 9, 11, 12. The Saints ſtood and cryed, *Salvation to our God who ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb:* The Angels ſtood round about ſaying, *Amen, Amen.*

3. In their readineſs to do the will of God, and execute his commands; therefore the Angels are deſcribed to have wings, *Iſa.* 6. 2. *with twain they did fly.* How God ſhall pleaſe to employ Angels or Saints in the world to come is not for us to enquire: But they ſhall be alike ready to do his will, and ſerve his pleaſure, whatever it ſhall be. Even whilſt the Saints are imperfect on earth, they can cry, *Here am I, ſend me*, Iſa. 6. 8. How much more ready ſhall they be then,

when all their fetters are knockt off!

4. They shall be as the Angels in their *chearful* and *unwearied* execution of the will of God: So the Angels are, and so shall the Saints be. The Spirit shall be then *more* willing, and the Flesh shall be *no more* weak, as it is now, for when it is raised again, it shall be in *power*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 43. More things of this nature might be added: but I pass lightly over them, because, although they be true, yet they are not principally lookt at in this Text: therefore I come to the second thing wherein the glorified Saints shall be like unto the Angels, and that is;

2. In their *way of living*. They shall be like the Angels, *i. e.* saith one truly, ἰσαγγέλως βιοῦντες, living like the Angels: How is that? our Saviour tells us, Neither marrying, nor being given in marriage: it is added presently in *Luk.* 20. 36. *For neither can they dye any more*: If there be no dying, there will be no need of propagation; if no need of propagation, then why should they marry? The Angels are single, and know no other conjunction, but with God in a spiritual manner: no more shall the Saints. But

what

what great matter is that to be like the Angels in? what perfection is that? Many Saints, yea and sinners too upon earth, are so like the Angels; nay, and the Devils too. Therefore you must know that our Saviour under this phrase of not marrying &c. doth comprehend all manner of *creature-converse*, all kind of living upon, and delighting in the creature by a *Synecdoche* of the part, as is ordinary in Scripture, *I have not given upon usury*, saith the Prophet, yet the people curse me, *Jer.* 15.10. *i.e.* I have had no dealing in the world, no negotiation: By one kind he understands the whole, *Ezek.* 25 41. where, by eating their fruits, and drinking their milk, is understood the possessing of all that was theirs: And in many other places, the Spirit of God uses this Tropical way of speaking.

The Angels of God neither marry, nor are given in marriage, *i. e.* they live not upon any created good, delight not in any created comfort, but live entirely upon God, converse with him, are everlastingly beholding his glory, and delighting themselves in him: Thus shall the glorified Saints live for ever.

Their bodies ſhall not need nor uſe created ſupplies, food, phyſick, rayment, &c. which things in this animal ſtate they ſtand in need of, *Mat.* 6. 32. But that's not all; for their ſouls ſhall not any longer deſire, nor hanker after any created thing; but (as the Angels) ſhall be poſſeſt of God, filled with the fulneſs of God; all the powers and faculties of them perfectly refined & ſpiritualized, abſtracted from all created things, eternally rejoycing & delighting themſelves in the contemplation and participation of the ſupream & infinite good: For during this earthly & imperfect ſtate, not only the bodies of good men feed upon, and are ſuſtained by the creatures in common with other men, but even their ſouls do taſte too much of worldly contentments, & drink too deep of earthly pleaſures, and creature-comforts: Even the moſt refined ſouls upon earth, though they do not properly feed upon any thing below God, yet do oft dip the end of their Rod in this honey that lyes upon the earth (with *Jonathan*) do caſt an unchaſt eye upon their earthly enjoyments, and delight in them in a way too groſs and unſpiritual;

unspiritual; having abstracted them from God, and loving them with a distinct love. But in the Resurrection it shall not be so: for the holy Souls shall be perfectly conformed to the holy God, shall feed upon him singly, live upon him entirely, be wrapt up in him wholly, and be satisfied in him solely and everlastingly: and so shall they be ἰσάγγελοι, *equal to the Angels.* The creature, although it do not fill any truly sanctified Soul upon earth, yet it hath some room there; but then it shall be perfectly cast out, and the Soul shall be filled with all the fulness of God: the creature is now much in some godly Souls, and something in all of them, but then it shall be nothing at all to them, or in them? but God shall be *all in all*, all things in all of them; as the way of the Saints living, and their glorified state is described, 1 *Cor.* 15. 28. ἵνα ᾖ ὁ θεὸς πάντα ἐν πᾶσι, *that God may be all in all.* *They shall inherit all things*: but how is that? why, see the explication of it in the following words, God will be their God, *Rev* 21. 7. *He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God.* God shall be unto them

instead of all thing. In that state there shall be no need of Sun or Moon, *Rev.* 21. 23. by which excellent and useful creatures, the whole Creation seems to be understood; for they that shall live above the Sun and Moon, shall certainly live above all things that are below these: But how then? why it follows, *The glory of God shall enlighten them, and the Lamb shall be their light:* so *Rev.* 22. 5 *And there shall be no night there, and they need no Candle, neither light of the Sun; for the Lord giveth them light:* All happiness is derived into them from God; and therefore there shall be no night; no want of any creature-comfort to them, neither shall they desire any thing more of the creature, whether *small* or *great*, whether *Candle* or *Sun*. For explication of this their blessed life, let me allude to that of our Saviour, *Luk.* 12. 24. *The Fowls of the Heaven neither sow nor reap*, yet God feedeth them: So the Saints of Heaven neither want not desire any created good; for they feed upon God the supreme and infinite good. And again, *vers.* 27. *The Lilies neither toyl nor spin, and yet* Solomon *in all his*

glory

glory was not arrayed like one of these: These blessed souls have no respect at all to things terrene and created, yet are they so filled and adorned with the glory of the infinite Majesty, that *Solomon* in all his glory was a filthy and ragged thing in comparison of them. In a word, the state of the glorified Saints and Angels is set out by our Saviour in the same manner, by one and the same description, and that is the seeing of God: The life of Angels, is called a continual beholding of the face of God, *Mat.* 18. 10. and the state of the Saints glory and happiness is also a seeing of God, *Mat.* 5. 8. *Heb.* 12. 14. *Rev.* 22. 4. *They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.* Now this phrase, the seeing of God, applyed both to the Saints and Angels, doth place their happiness in God alone, excluding the creature; and it doth import the fulness, and clearness, and certainty of that their bliss.

Thus I have shewed you in what *sense* (though I am not able to shew you in what *degree*) the glorified Saints shall be like the Angels of God in Heaven: Their way of living, *viz.* upon the

blessed God alone, shall be the same with that of the holy Angels.

Application. From the discovery of the future state of the Saints, I find my self filled with indignation,

1 *Reproof*: Against the *carnall conceits* that many Christians have of Heaven. *Christians* do I call them! Nay, herein they seem rather *Mahumetans*, who place Heaven in the full and lasting enjoyment of all creature-comforts; nay indeed of sinful and abominable pleasures, as one may read in their *Alcoran*. It may be few Christians are altogether so sensual; but, sure I am, the far greater sort of Christians (so called) are very gross and carnal; at least very low in their conceits of the state of future happiness; Heaven is a word as little understood as Holiness; and that, I am sure, is the greatest mystery in the world; it would be tedious to run thorow the particular various apprehensions of men in this matter and indeed impossible to know them. The common sort of people understand either just nothing by Heaven but a glorious name; or at best, but a freeness

nesse from bodily torment: As, nothing of Hell affects them, but that dreadful word *fire*, so nothing of Heaven, but the comfortable word, *Rest* or safety. Others, it may be, think there is something positive in Heaven, and they dream of an honourable, easie, pleasant life, free from such kind of toyls, labours, pains, persecutions, reproaches, penuries which men are subject to in this life: This is a true notion but much below the nature of that happy state. Others are yet more highly affected with the words of *Glory* and *Glorious*, and seem to be much ravished with them; but are like men in a maze or wonderment, that admire something that they understand not, and are altogether confounded in their own apprehensions of it: As if a man should be mightily taken with such a fine name as *Arabia the happy*, and by a blind fervor of mind should desire to go and visit it. Others rise higher yet in their apprehensions of Heaven, and look upon it as a holy state; but that holiness is negative, *viz.* a perfect freedom from sin, and all temptations to it: And indeed this is a precious consideration,

and

and that wherein many a weary Soul finds much reſt. But yet this amounts not to the life of Angels; it is a lower conſideration of Heaven, than what our Saviour here preſents us with. The ſtate of the glorified Saints, ſhall not only be a ſtate of freedom from temporal pains, or eternal pains, or a freedom from ſpiritual pains and imperfections; but a ſtate of perfect *poſitive holineſs*; *pure light*, *ardent love*, *ſpiritual liberty*, *holy delights*; when all created good ſhall perfectly vaniſh, all created love ſhall be ſwallowed up, the Soul ſhall become of a moſt God-like diſpoſition, ſhining forth in the glory that he ſhall put upon it, glorying in nothing but the bleſſed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in his divine Image and perfections, and wrapt up entirely into his infinite fulneſs to all eternity: Which hath made me oft-times to nauſeate, and indeed to blame the poor low deſcriptions of the Kingdom of Heaven, which I have found in Books and Sermons, for too dry, yea and groſs; which do deſcribe Heaven principally as a place, and give it ſuch circumſtances of beauty, fulneſs, ſecurity,

light

light and ſplendor, pleaſant ſociety, good neighbourhood, as they think will moſt commend an earthly habitation. True indeed, the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture is pleaſed to condeſcend ſo far to our weak capacities, as to deſcribe that glorious ſtate to us by ſuch things as we do beſt underſtand, and are apt to be moſt taken with, and do moſt gratifie our ſenſes in this world; as a *Kingdom*, *Paradiſe*, a *Glorious City*, a *Crown*, an *Inheritance*, &c. But yet it is not the will of God that his enlightened people ſhould reſt in ſuch low notions of eternal life: For in other places God ſpeaks of the ſtate of glory, according to the nature and excellency of it, and not according to the weakneſs of our underſtanding; and deſcribes it at another rate, calling it the *life of Angels*; and here, *the beholding of God* (Mat. 5. 8.) *a coming unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*, Epheſ. 4. 13. Gods being *All* things in us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 28. It is called a *Knowing of God, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, Joh. 17. 3. In a word, which is as high as can be ſpoke, higher indeed than can be perfectly underſtood, it is called

called a *Being like unto God*, 1 Joh. 3. 21. *We shall be like unto him.* But this Use is not so much for *Reproof*, as it is for *Information*.

2. Here is matter of *Reproof*, yea and of just indignation against the gross, low, sensual, earthly life of Professors, who yet hope to be the children of the Resurrection, and to be as the Angels of God in Heaven. What, hope to be like them then, and yet altogether unlike them now! I speak not in a passion, but out of a just indignation that I have conceived against my self, and against the generality even of Saints themselves. I am not going to speak of *Covetousness* commonly so called; there is a sin much like to it, which is not indeed a single sin, but an evil and unseemly temper, which is *earthly-mindedness*, or minding of earthly things; or if you will, because I would not be misunderstood, a living upon the creature, or a loving of the creature with a distinct love. Oh the insensible secrecy, and insuperable power of this creature-love! I cannot sufficiently exclaim against it. Why do we spend noble affections upon such low and empty nothings!

nothings! Are we called with such a *high* Calling, think you, that our conversation should be so low? Is the fulness of the fountain yours, and do ye yet delight to sit down by, and bath your selves in the shallow streams? Is your *life hid with Christ in God?* Why then do you converse, as if your life were bound up in the creature? Have you laid up your treasure in the blessed God? what do your hearts then so far from it? Is your *happiness* in Heaven? why then is not your *conversation* there too? Do you count it your bliss to *see* God? what then mean those fond and wanton *glances* that ye cast upon created comforts, and that unchaste love which you bestow upon things below? I mean, not only the *bleatings of the Sheep, and the lowings of the Oxen*: I speak not of the grosser sort of earthly-mindedness, sensuality or covetousness; but of that more refined and hidden creature-love; a loving of friends, relations, health, liberty, life, and that not in God, but with a love distinct from that love wherewithwe love God. To love all these in God, and for his sake, and as flowing

flowing from him, and partaking of him, and with the same love wherewith we love God himself, is allowed us: But to love them with a particular love, as things distinct from God, to delight in them meerly as creatures; and to follow them as if some good, or happiness, or pleasure were to be found in them distinctly from what is in God; this is a branch of spiritual *Adultery*, I had almost said *Idolatry*. To taste a sweetness in the creature, and to see a beauty and goodness in it, is our duty: but then it must be the sweetness of God in it, and the goodness of God which we ought alone to taste and see in it. As we say, *Uxor splendet radiis mariti*, the wife shines with the rayes of her husband: so more truly, every creature shines but by a borrowed light; and commends unto us the goodness, and sweetness, and fulness of the blessed Creator. You have heard that the glorified souls shall live upon God alone entirely, wholly, eternally; and should not the less glorious souls, I mean gracious souls, do so too, in some degree? yea even we who are upon earth, and do yet use creatures, should

behold

behold all the scattered beams of goodness, sweetness, perfection that are in these creatures, all united and gathered up in God, and so feed upon them onely in God, and upon God in all them. It is the character of wicked and godless men that they set up, and drive a trade for themselves; live in a way distinct from God, as though they had no dependence upon him, they love the world with a predominant love; they enjoy creature-comforts in a gross, unspiritual manner, they dwell upon the dark side of their mercies, they treasure up riches, not only in their *chests*, but in thier *hearts*; they feed upon the creature, not only with their *bodies*, but their very *souls* do feed upon them; and thus, in a word, they *live without God in the world*: All this is no wonder for that which is of the earth, must needs be earthly, *John* 3. 31. But is it not a monstrous thing, that a heavenly Soul should feed upon earthly trash? I speak without any *Hyperbole*; the famous King of *Babylon* forsaking the society of men, and herding himself with the beasts of the earth, and eating grass with the Oxen, was not so absurd

surd a thing, nor half so monstrous or unseemly, as the children of the Most High God, forsaking the true bread of Souls, and feeding upon the low fare of carnal men, even created sweetness, worldly goods: Nay, a glorious star falling from its own sphere, and choaking it self in the dust, would not be such an eminent piece of baseness: For what is said of the true God in one sense, *John* 3. 31. is true of the truly godly in this sense; *He that cometh from Heaven is above all*, i. e. above all things that are below God himself.

3. Shall this life of Angels be also the life of Saints? *This may then serve as a powerfull consideration to mortifie in us the love of this animal life*, to make us weary of this low kind of living, and quicken us to long after so blessed a change. Well might the Apostle say indeed, that to dye was *gain*, *Phil.* 1. 21. For, is not this gain, to exchange an *animal* life, for an *Angelical* life; a life which is in some sense common to the very beasts with us, for that which in some sense may be called the life of God? For as the blessed and holy God lives upon his own infinite and self-

sufficient

sufficient fulness, without being beholden to any thing without himself, so shall the Saints live upon him, and upon the self-same infinite fulness, and shall not need any creature-contributions. The Apostle indeed saith, That *the last enemy to be destroyed is death*, (1 Cor. 15. 26.) which is true of enemies without us; and it is true with respect to Christ, who shall make a general Resurrection from the dead; for that is the proper meaning of it: But it is true also, that the last enemy to be overcome within us, is the love of life: Therefore it is said, That a man will part with any thing to keep his life, *Job* 2. 4. And we do generally excuse the matter, and cry, Oh! life is sweet, life is precious. It must be confest, and it may be granted; I believe that there is an inclination of the soul to the body (arising from the dear and unconceiveable union that God himself hath made of them) which is purely natural (some say altogether necessary for the maintaining of man in this complex state) and not in it self sinful: Possibly there may not be found a man upon earth so holy and mortified, in whom

whom this is not found; certainly it is the last hinderance to be removed out of the way of our perfect happiness. This, although in it self natural, yea necessary, and without blame, yet in the inordinateness of it, ordinarily, if not constantly, becomes sinful. I count him the most perfect man in the world, who loves not his own life with an inordinate, sinful love: who loves it only in God, and not with a creature-love distinct from God. There are two waies whereby this natural and lawful love of life becomes sinful, *viz. immoderateness*, and *inordinateness*: *Immoderateness* is when men love their lives at that rate, that they are filled with unreasonable and distracting fears, cares, and thoughts about them, when the whole *business* of life is almost nothing else but a studiousness to preserve the *Being* of life. *Inordinateness* is when men, though they do not love their lives at that excessive rate, yet do love life as a creature-good not in God, nor in order to him, but love it for it self, as something out of God: Every carnal man in the world is guilty of the latter; and I doubt but few Saints altogether

gether free from the guilt of it. Now that this immoderate love of life ought to be subdued in Christians, all men almost will grant: If any will not grant it, we can easily prove it from the command of God, *Mat.* 6. 15. *Take no thought for your life*, 1 Joh. 2. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.* Both which words, in the favourablest interpretation that can be given of them, do in the judgement of all, forbid immoderation: Nay, a meer Philosopher would enforce this from meer moral considerations, which I cannot now stand upon. But this inordinate love of life, as it is a more secret, sticking evil, a more refined corruption, is harder to be discovered, and men are loth to be convinced of the evil of it. Now this particular distinct loving of life, not as in God, but in it self, as a creature-good, is clearly condemned in that first and great Commandment, *Mat.* 22. *vers.* 37. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, q. d.* God the Supreme, Infinite, Perfect, Original, Essential, Self-sufficient Good, is to be loved in the highest,

higheſt, and pureſt, and ſtrongeſt manner, that the heart of men is capable to love; and all other things only in him, and under him, and as being of him, and for his ſake. Let it be allowed that life is good; yet it muſt be added, that it is but a created good: let it be allowed that live is comfortable; yet it muſt be acknowledged, that mans chiefeſt comfort and happineſs doth not ſtand in this animal life. So then, life it ſelf is to be loved in God, who is the fountain and ſpring of life, it is to be loved in the quality of a created good, and no otherwiſe: Now created goods are to be loved only in the Creator, as coming from him, as partaking of him, as leading to him. Argue the caſe a little, thus: The ſoul of man is allowed to love its body with which the great God hath match it: and to love union with this body which union we call life: But this body being a creature, and a creature much inferiour to it ſelf, and much more ignoble than it ſelf, cannot in reaſon be judged to be the fit and adequate object of its ſtrongeſt and beſt affections: That muſt needs be ſomething more excellent than

than it ſelf, and that cannot be any thing in this world (for this world hath nothing ſo noble, ſo excellent in it as the Soul of man) it muſt indeed be the Creator himſelf. Well, ſeeing God is the ſupream, ſelf-ſufficient, perfect Good, he is to be loved with all the ſtrength and powers of the Soul, ſingly and entirely: And the will of God, being God himſelf, is not only to be ſubmitted to, or reſted in, but to be choſen and loved above all created things; yea even above life it ſelf, the beſt of creatures. So then, if it be the will of God to call for our lives, we ought readily to give them up; becauſe we ought to love the will of God much more than our lives. I pray you drink in that notion, *viz.* that the will of God being pure, holy, perfect, ſhould not only be ſubmitted to, or reſted in, but even loved and choſen above all creatures: Now the will of God is not that only whereby he teacheth men, and preſcribes Laws to them, but that whereby he rules, and governs the World, and diſpoſes of men in any condition of life, or takes away their lives from them. The eternal fountain

of

of goodneſs can ſend forth nothing but what is perfectly good: and that which is perfectly good, ought to be loved with an univerſal, pure, and (as far as poſſible) perfect love. This you will ſay, perhaps, is a high and a hard ſaying: But, let it not ſeem impoſſible, for a man to love his own life only in God, and in ſubordination to him; for this God requires (and he requires not things impoſſible) *Luk.* 14. 26. *If any man come after me, and hate not his own life, he cannot be my Diſciple, i. e.* not ſimply hate it, but in compariſon of me and my will: It is not then impoſſible, nay, you ſee it is a neceſſary duty, without which we cannot be Chriſts Diſciples. The Saints of old found it poſſible. Holy *Paul* gives this anſwer readily, *Act.* 21. 13. *I am ready to dye at Jeruſalem for the name of the Lord Jeſus*, and *Act.* 20. 24. *I count not my life dear unto me, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy*: It is witneſſed of the whole Army of the Saints, in *Rev.* 12. 11. That *they loved not their lives unto the death, i. e.* they did not value them in reſpect of God and his truth. Neither let any one flatter himſelf, and ſay,

Yet,

Yea, if I were called to dye for God, I would rather do it than deny him: For the will of God is as much to be eyed in his ſending for us by a natural death, as by Martyrdom, and a not giving up our lives to him at any time, is as truly to deny him and his will, as not to give them up at the ſtake, when we are called to it. Beſides, how ſhall we imagine that he that is unwilling to dye in his bed, ſhould be willing to dye at a ſtake? Now this duty of being mortified to the love of this animal life, being ſo difficult, yet ſo neceſſary, and ſo noble; how doth it become every Saint to ſtudy to attain to this perfection! which, that we may, let us preſs upon our ſelves this Conſideration, this Doctrine, *That the glorified Saints ſhall live as the Angels of God in Heaven.* We know that if this body were broken down, this low life cut off, we ſhould live like Angels, not being beholden any more to poor creatures for help or comfort, but ſhould be filled with the fulneſs of God, filled with his Image and Glory, and live upon him entirely for evermore. Yea I may add, that this very living above our own lives, meerly

at the will of God, is a participation of the Angelical Life even in this world: Therefore labour to be mortified to that love of this life which is here upon earth; yea be weary of it, yea almost ashamed of it.

4. Shall we thus live the lives of the Angels, subsisting in God, feasting upon him, filled with him to all eternity? *This may moderate our sorrow which we conceive for the loss of any created good,* houses, lands, husband, wife, children, &c. yet a little while, and we shall not miss them, shall not need them, shall not desire them any more. The blessed Angels live a glorious life, and they have none of these; but are perfectly satisfied in the enjoyment of God alone: They have no wives nor children, yet they want none: And yet a little while, and we shall have none neither, neither shall we want them, having all things in the God of all things: They neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are in conjunction with the Father, with love, and goodness, and truth itself, and so they have no want of any thing. If you have no Candles here in the house, yet it is towards day-break,

and the Sun will rise upon you, and you shall need none, and yet have light enough too. In a word, learn to live beside them whilst you have them, and you will be the better able to live without them, when they are removed.

5. I come now to the fifth and last use that I shall make of this Doctrine; and oh that you and I may make this happy use of it! Shall the Saints be as the Angels of God in their way of living, in living upon God, and enjoying all happiness in him alone for ever? Shall this certainly be our life in Heaven? Oh then *labour to begin this life upon earth!* If you cannot perfectly transcribe, yet, at least, imitate that Angelical kind of life. Though you are here imprisoned in a body of earth, & oft cumbred and clogg'd with bodily infirmities, and called to attend upon bodily necessities; yet, as far as this animal state will permit, live upon God. Do not excuse nor vindicate that low kind of earthly life; do not justifie your living below and besides God, but lift up your selves to behold where your happiness lies, and live not willingly below it. Certainly a godly soul

hath more than bare hope in this world: God the blessed, infinite and communicative good, hath not lockt up himself so far out of sight, but that he gives his people a comfortable beholding of him even whilst they are in their Pilgrimage: and what *Solomon* saith of the life of the godly, he means it of their present life, *Prov.* 15. 24. *The way of life is above to the wise:* Their living not only shall be, but is now above; it is a high way of living: They are certainly a puny sort of Mechanical Christians, that think and talk only of a Heaven to come, and dream of an happiness without them, and distinct from them: The truly godly and God-like soul cannot so content himself, but being spirited and principled from above, is carried out after the Infinite and Almighty Good, as a thing is carried towards its centre; and hastens into his embraces, as the Iron hastens to the Load-stone, and longs to be in conjunction with it. If therefore ye be from Heaven, live above all, above all earthly things: *If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above,* Col. 3. 1. If ye be *born of God,* live upon God,

God, and *ſuck not the breaſts* of a ſtranger. Deny ſelf, live beſide ſelf, *i. e.* live not to your luſt, live not to the ſervice of your ſenſes, to the luſt of the fleſh, to the luſt of the eye, to the pride of life; let not your ſouls be ſervants to your ſins, no nor to your ſenſes; that were for ſervants to ride on horſe back and *Princes* to walk on foot, *Eccleſ.* 10. 7. Live above ſelf, *i. e.* let your ſouls quit all their own intereſt in themſelves, and entirely reſign themſelves to God as to all points of duty and ſervice. But that's not all; neither is that it which I preſs you to from theſe words; but live above the creature and whatſoever is in it, *viz.* delighting in God, converſing and communing with him alone, as the chiefeſt Good: Deſire not any creature any further, than as it may help you forward to the Creator; neither delight in it any further, than as it either repreſents ſome of the divine perfections, witneſſeth ſomething of divine love, or leadeth to ſome divine participation or communion: Seeing we ſhall come to live upon God, and delight in God alone without any creature; let us now live upon,

feed upon, love God alone in every creature: Now to give you a more distinct knowledge of this high and noble life, I will explain it in some particulars, negatively and affirmatively. First, *Negatively.*

1. *Live not upon Self*; I speak not of living unto Self, but live not upon Self, Self-excellencies, Self-sufficiencies, any created accomplishments, which was the life of the *Stoicks*, those great Philosophers, who placed happiness in the enjoyment of themselves, which they called *αὐταρξία*. To enjoy ones self indeed is a high duty, a noble priviledge, a duty of the Gospel, *Luk.* 21. 19. *Possess ye your souls*: But how must we enjoy our selves? why only in God. He injoys himself,

1. Not who in a sullen melancholly, retires to a solitary and monastical life, as many of the sowrer sort of Papists do.

2. Nor he that in a proud mood disdains the perfections of God shining forth in other men; and hiding himself from them through envy, contents himself to sit and admire his own personal accomplishments, as many humorists do.

3, Nor he who finding nothing without him, nor knowing nothing above him to give his soul her full rest, settles upon a foundation of his own and admires a self-sufficiency in the temper of his own spirit a little subdued by Philosophical Precepts, as the *Stoicks* did, and our Quakers do: But he who enjoyes himself in God, i. e. who doth not view himself in the narrow point of his own Being, but taking a view of himself in the unbounded essence of God, loves, and enjoyes, and values himself, and all his personal excellencies as he is in God, and partakes of his perfections. To live in a way of self-converse, is below the end of mans creation, who was made for a higher good: And hereby a man shall never obtain true happiness, for it is peculiar to God alone to be happy in himself. "In a word, a Soul that confines it self "to it self, and lives, and moves, and "rejoyces only within the narrow cell "of its own particular Being, deprives "it self of that Almighty and Original "Goodness and Glory that fills the "world, and shines thorow the whole "Creation."

2. *Live not upon any creature without your ſelves.* Self indeed is a creature, but yet for clearneſs in proceeding, we ſhall diſtinguiſh them. Now this is the life of the greateſt ſort of men, they live beſide God, and move only within the ſphere of the creature: you will eaſily underſtand that I ſpeak not of the bodies living upon the creature; for ſo God hath appointed that it ſhall live: and yet as to this too, I ſay with our Saviour, *Man liveth not by bread alone, &c.* But I ſpeak of the Soul of man living upon the creature as its higheſt good, and feeding upon it as its beſt fare: They riſe up early, and ſit up late, and God is not in all their thoughts: They are filled with domeſtick and forein comforts, but behold not the Father of Lights from whom all theſe deſcend: They live upon the good things of the world, yet live without God in the world. Now by theſe men,

1. I do not mean thoſe Heathens that in the moſt Idolatrous manner, do in the literal ſenſe, ſet up the creatures for Gods.

2. Nor thoſe Chriſtians that in a moſt groſs

gross manner do make Idols of the creatures, and place their happiness in them.

2. No nor only those earthly professors, who follow the world too eagerly, and have such a deep and rooted respect for it, that they can be ordinarily content to suffer creature-employments to justle God and duties out of their hearts and houses, whose worldliness is apparently too hard for their Religion. Who then? Shall we come any nearer? yes;

4. Those are guilty of creature-converse, who do not enjoy all creatures in God; who love any thing in any creature with a distinct love, that do not love it only in God; who love silver, gold, houses lands, trading, friends, with a particular pinching love: Or take heed of this creature love; of valuing any created thing any otherwise than in God, any otherwise than as being from God, partaking of him, and leading to him.

3. *Live not upon Ordinances*: These are Gods institutions; love them, cleave to them, attend upon them, let no temptation cause you to leave them;

but live not upon them, place not your Religion, place not your hope, your happiness in them, but love them only in God attend upon them, yet not so much upon them, as upon God in them; lie by the Pool, but wait for the Angel: love not, no not a divine ordinance for its own sake: Why? who doth so? Alas, who almost doth not?

1. Thus did they in *Ezek.* 33. 32. who delighted in the Prophets eloquence, and in the Rhetorick of his Sermons, as much as in a well tuned voice, and harmonious musick: and so do thousands in *England*, who read the Bible for the style or the stories sake; and love to sit under learned and elegant discourses, more for *accomplishment*, than for *conversion*: and swarms of Priests who preach themselves, more than Christ Jesus even in his own ordinances; as a proud Boy rides a horse into the Market, to set forth himself more than his Masters goods.

2. But there are many not so gross as these, who do yet use ordinances in a way very gross and unspiritual, placing their devotion in them, and sinking their Religion into a settled course of hearing,

hearing or praying; who will wait upon God (as they call it) at some set and solemn times, *New Moons* and *Sabbaths*, it may be evening and morning; but Religion must not be too busie with them, nor intermeddle in their ordinary affairs, or wordly employments, it hath no place there; they do not count it a garment for every dayes wear.

3. And not only these, but even almost all men are too apt to seek rest in duties and ordinances; or, at least, to be pretty well satisfied with the work done, whether they have conversed with God there or no; Oh if you love your Souls, seek your happiness higher! conversing with divine Ordinances, I confess, is honourable and amiable, but it is too low a life for an immortal Soul. *Affirmatively.*

Let nothing satisfie you but God himself; take up with no pleasure, no treasure, no portion, no paradise; nay no Heaven, no happiness, below the infinite, supreme, and self-sufficient good. Let your eye be upon him, and his all-filling fulness, let your desire be unto him, and to the remembrance of his

name;

name; follow hard after to know the Lord, and to enjoy the Father through his Son Jesus Christ; let you fellowship be with the Father, and with the Son by the Spirit, *1 Joh.* 1. 3. *O love the Lord all ye his Saints*, *Psal.* 31. 23. yea, love him with all your soul, and all your strength, *Mat.* 22. 37. yea, and keep your selves alwayes in the love of God, *Jude* 21. persevere and increase in the love of God; *Keep your selves in the love of God.* Oh sweet duty! O amiable pleasant task! Oh sweet and grateful command! Away ye crowd of creatures, I must keep my heart for my God: Away ye gawdy tutors away ye glittering toys, there is no room for you: My whole soul, if its capacity were ten thousand times larger than it is, were too scant to entertain the supreme good, to let in infinite goodness and fulness. Oh charge it upon your selves with the greatest vehemence! love the Lord, O my soul, keep thy self in the love of God; let the love of God constrain you, and keep your selves under the most powerfull constraints of it. In a word, live upon God as upon uncreated life it self; drink at the fountain,

in, feed upon infinite fulneſs, depend upon Almighty Power, refer your ſelves to unſearchable wiſdom, and unbounded love; ſee nothing but God in the creature, taſte nothing but God in the world, delight your ſelves in him, long for communion with him, and communications from him, to receive of his fulneſs grace for grace. Then do we live moſt like Angels, when we live moſt purely in God, and find all the powers of our ſouls ſpending themſelves upon him, and our ſelves, our life, and all the comforts of it flowing from him, and again ſwallowed up in him. But becauſe we are yet in the body, I ſhall explain it in theſe following particulars.

1. *Converſe with God in all your Self-excellencies.* I bade you before not converſe with theſe; now, I ſay, converſe with God in theſe. Thus do the Angels, they know nothing that they have of their own, they enjoy nothing diſtinct from God: They are excellent creatures, excellent in knowledge, power, holineſs, &c. yet they enjoy all their excellencies in God, and aſcribe them all to him, *Rev.* 7. 12. And ſo let us labour to do.

1. View

1. View your ſelves, not in your own particular Beings, but in the Eſſence of God; look upon your ſelves as being and ſubſiſting in the midſt of an Infite Eſſence, in which the whole Creation is, as it were, wrapt up, and doth ſubſiſt.

2. And whatever excellency you find in your Souls or Bodies, look not upon it as your own; maintain not a *Meum* and *Tuum*, a diſtinction of intereſts between God and your ſelves; but look upon all as Gods, and enjoy it in him.

2. When you find your ſelves tempted to caſt a fond and unchaſte look upon the beauty, ſtrength, activity, or temper of your own bodies, upon the ingenuity, wiſdom, conſtancy, courage, compoſedneſs of your own Souls; take heed of ſetling into a ſelfiſh admiration of any of them, but enjoy them in God, and ſay, This, O my Body, this, O my Soul, is no other than the portraicture of the Bleſſed God; theſe created excellencies are broken beams of the infinite, unſpotted, uncreated perfections, *Jer.* 9. 23, 24. Having once attained to this, we ſhall no longer covet to be admired,

mired, desire to be commended, fret at being undervalued; I mean not in a selfish manner, but rather break out in a spiritual passion with the Psalmist, *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works in the children of men!* Psalm. 107. 8.

3. Nay, let me add, when you find your selves ready to put your own stamp upon Gods best coin, to look upon supernatural gifts and graces with a sinful selfish admiration, remember that you have them only in Christ Jesus, and enjoy them in your head; labour to enjoy grace it self only in Christ; as the Apostle, *Gal.* 2. 20. *I, yet not I, but Christ in me: I laboured, yet not I, but the grace of God.* 1 Cor. 15. 10. So ought we to glory, I believe, I love, I am patient, penitent, humble, yet not I, but the grace of God that is with me, Christ Jesus that dwelleth in me. And indeed a godly man who thus lives at the very height of his own Being, yea and above it too, knows best how to reverence himself, yea and to love himself too, and yet without any self-love: For he loves himself in God, and his own endowments as divine ornaments.

2. Converse

2. Converse with God, and live upon him in the excellencies of all other creatures, & in all your creature-enjoyments. We cannot live without creatures, as the Angels do indeed; but let us come as near them as we can, which is by living above creatures: place your happiness in God, and your hearts upon him; labour to find God all things to you, and in you, and to be filled with his fulness, labour to get your understandings filled with the knowledge of God, your wills filled with his divine will, your hearts filled with his infinite goodness & sweetness, your memories filled with the remembrance of his name, your whole souls filled with his holy and pure Image, filled with the fruits of his holy Spirit: Nay let these very bodies be filled not only with his good creatures; but more especially with his good will in the creatures. It is said indeed of the sensual Epicures of the world, that their *bellies are filled* with Gods *hid treasure*, i. e. with rare and precious delicacies: But how much better doth God fill the bellies of his Saints with his hid treasures, when he feedeth them with his divine

diuine ſauour, and *dippeth his hand* with them *in the diſh?* This is meat within meat which the Saints eat of, which other men, though they feed at the ſame Table, know not of. The glorified Saints ſhall be ſatisfied wholly and perfectly with the divine Image, ſhining glorioufly on them, and in them; to which purpoſe that of the Pſalmiſt may be accommodated, *Pſal.* 17. *ult. When I awake, &c.* Well, we cannot be ſo ſatisfied in this life, it ſeems; however though we cannot be ſo ſatisfied with it; yet let us not be ſatisfied without it, nor ſatisfied with any thing beſides it: Reſolve, holy Soul, well, if I muſt not be fully ſatisfied with the Image of my heavenly Father till I awake, I will lie down and fall aſleep hungry as I am then; for I will not fill my mouth with chaff, nor my ſoul with *the huſks that the Swine do eat.* But, in the mean time, get what you can of God out of creature-enjoyments.

1. *Enjoy all things for God:* And that theſe two wayes.

1. *Uſe all for him:* Thoſe riches, honours, intereſts, friends, which are *Clogs upon the heels* of others, let them

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be as *heels* to you to carry you Heaven-ward; let you Souls be *winged* with those very enjoyments, wherewith the *wings* of others are *pinioned*; and that which is fewel to their worldly lusts, let it be as fewel to feed and nourish your spiritual love. To use what we have for God, is the only way of not abusing it: This is one way of enjoying all for God, to use all for him; and yet there is something higher in that phrase of enjoying all for God, than thus, *viz.*

2. *Value no creature-comfort any further than as it leads to God:* And this in a double sense too. *First*, Value things to be good only by this, by their leading you unto God. *Perfectum in suo genere est mensura reliquorum*: Now God being the Supreme and Infinite Good, any thing is so far good, as it leads to the enjoyment of him: Now the enjoyment of God is only in being like to him; Holiness is his Image: So then every thing is good that tends to sanctification, and to make men partakers of a Divine Nature. We are usually mistaken in the true notion of good and evil, of mercies and judgments, judging

judging according to the taſte, as fooliſh Patients do; but Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts. Meaſure all things by the proportion they bear, and the tendency they have to the Supream Good; and call not any thing evil that brings nearer to him, nor any thing good that draws off from him. *Secondly*, When you have found a thing that is really good, tending and leading to the chief good, and to the poſſeſſion of him, labour to injoy it; and rejoyce in it only under this notion, as ſuch; when you love it, let it be with a pure ſpiritual love; and ſo order your delight in it, that it may be ſaid, you do rather rejoyce in the end of it, than in the injoyment of it.

2. Another way of living upon God in the creature, is, *To enjoy all things as partaking of him. Every good and perfect gift is from above.* Every beam of created light floweth out of the *Father of light*, James 1. 17. When the bleſſed and glorious God framed this ſtately fabrick of the viſible world, becauſe there was nothing better in the world than himſelf, he was pleaſed to copy out himſelf in it, and to ſpread his own infinite

infinite perfections over it, and thorow it, *Rom.* 1. 20. ſo that every particular good is a bloſſom of the firſt goodneſs; every created excellency is a dark draught of God, and a broken beam of this infinite Sun of Righteouſneſs. Created life, beauty, wiſdom, goodneſs, ſweetneſs; are nothing elſe but effluxes, or rather ebullitions out of the ſelf-ſufficient fountain, ſcant communications made of himſelf, from uncreated life, eſſential wiſdom, univerſal goodneſs: And under this notion we ought only to enjoy them, and delight in them: And if we do ſo, we do not ſo much enjoy them, as God in them. Oh labour to do ſo! look upon the perfections which you find here below, not ſo much as the perfections of this or that particular Being, but as they are ſo many drops riſen out of the fountain of all perfections, in whom they all meet, and are concentred. It is well expreſt by one, *In a particular Being love the univerſal goodneſs*; let the whole world be as the Garden of God to you, where every creature is a flower from which you may ſuck ſomething of the divine ſweetneſs. Alas, at what a

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low and ſenſual rate do we live, when we rejoyce in creatures, either as they are *excellent*, or as they are *ours*; whereas indeed neither of theſe is true: For they are not excellent, but God is excellent in them: And how can we call any thing our own, when God made both us and all things for himſelf? Oh how injurious is it to the bleſſed God, when we rob him of his own perfections that he hath imprinted upon the creature, by loving it, and delighting in it not as in him, but as ſomething diſtinct from him! Nay, we are then injurious to our ſelves, as we ſhall ſee by and by. Labour to enjoy, and to converſe with God in the creatures. *Oh how precious are the thoughts of thee unto me*, Oh God! cryed *David*, when he had been meditating of the creatures excellencies, *Pſal.* 139. 17. Labour to abſtract your mind from terrene things even in the enjoyment of them, and call upon your ſelves to love, and live, and feed upon God in them, live not upon the dark ſide of your mercies, but upon the repreſentations of God in them. Is there any thing good? Oh this is a taſte of infinite Goodneſs! Is there any thing

ſweet?

ſweet? Oh how ſweet is the God that made it ſo! Is there any thing lovely? it is a picture of him whoſe name is *Love*. Is any thing firm, ſtable, laſting? it is a ſhadow of that glorious eſſence, with whom there is no ſhadow of change. Have you any thing ſtrong? it ariſes out of that God with whom is *everlaſting ſtrength*. Doth any creature give reſt, eaſe, refreſhment? it ſprings out of the All-ſatisfying fulneſs of God. In a word, labour to climb up by every created excellency, as by ſo many beams to the Father of lights: let all the world be to you as Gods Temple, and be ready to ſay of every place, as *Jacob*, *How dreadful is this place; ſurely this is no other than the houſe of God!* That God who runs thorow all created Beings, and from himſelf derives ſeveral prints of beauty and excellency all the world over: But eſpecially take heed of your own created-comforts, that they do not inſenſibly lead away your hearts, and enſnare you into a ſinful, particular, diſtinct love of them; which is a ſin ſoon committed, hardly diſcerned, and moſt hardly reformed. If any

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be freed from these inordinate affections, sure they are but few, and those few have come dearly by it; as he said in another case; *with a great summ* they have *obtained this freedom*, they have payed for it, not with the foreskins of the *Philistines*, but with the lives of what they so loved; there being no way to cure this evil distemper, but cutting off the member infected with it, the part that it fed upon. As a branch of this head, let me add, labour to *live upon God in the excellencies of other men*: value them and all their accomplishments only in God, as he that did *deligere Deum habitantem in Augustino*: Admire God, and injoy God in them: Where ever you see wisdome, goodness, ingenuity, holiness, justice, or any other accomplishment: say, Here and there is God. And this is the honest way of making our selves Masters of whatever is another mans, and injoying it, as truly as he himself doth; yea as truly as if it were our own: when we behold all these beams, as coming from the same fountain of lights, and do love them all in him with an universal love.

This

This is the rare Art of having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things, of being rich, though one have nothing; and of being wiſe, though one know nothing.

3. The laſt way of living upon God in the creature, is, *To taſte and feed upon the love of God in them*; not only his common bounty, but his ſpecial love in Chriſt. The good will of God gives a ſweet reliſh to every morſel, as I hinted before. Even in the midſt of all your delightful, pleaſant, ſweet enjoyments, let your Souls be more affected with this, than with them; let this be as the *Manna* lying upon the top of all your outward comforts, which your ſpirits may gather up, and feed upon. But this I toucht upon before; therefore I ſhall add no more concerning it. Thus I have ſhewed you how you may imitate the life of Angels in living upon God, even whilſt you live in the body. To this I may add another particular or two.

3. *Converſe with God, and live upon him in all his Ordinances.* Let communion with God be your drift in every duty, and the very life and ſoul, and ſweetneſs of every ordinance. You never

never read of a soul more thirsty after Ordinances, than *David*, as might appear abundantly; yet if you look well into the expressions, you will find that it was not so much after them, as after God in them; not after the dead letter, but after the living God, *Psal.* 42. 2. *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God*; and *Psal.* 84. 2. *My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God.* Let the Word preacht or read be as a voice from Heaven talking with you; let your conference be a comment upon that word; let meditation be as a kind of bringing down God into your souls; and prayer as a raising up of your Souls unto God; nothing but faith and love put into phrases. And so of all the rest.

4. *Converse with God in all his Providences*; prosperity, adversity, plenty, penury, health, sickness, peace and perplexity. This is a large Theme: but as to prosperity, I have spoken something already, under that head of conversing with God in creature-enjoyments: As for adversity, I have said much more in a large discourse, to describe and commend the Art of con-

verſing with God in afflictions: Briefly at this time, converſe not with loſſes, wants, afflictions; but with God in them; and that not only with the juſtice, righteouſneſs, ſeverity and ſoveraignty of God in them; but with the goodneſs & mercy of God in them: They are dark Providences, we had not need to dwell altogether on the dark ſide of them. If all the wayes of the Lord towards his people be *mercy and truth*, Pſal. 25. 10. then his roughest and moſt uncouth wayes are ſo too. If God be wholly love, 1 *Joh.* 4. 8. then his very corrections proceed not from hatred: If it be his name to be good, and to do good, *Pſal.* 119. 68. where have we learnt then to call his afflicting Providences Evils, and to divide evil, which is but one, even as God is one, into *culpæ* and *pœnæ*, ſin & affliction? ſurly we ſpeak as men: And if God call them ſo, he ſpeaks after the manner of men, as he often doth. If the governing will of God be pure, perfect, and infinitely good and righteous, ought we not to converſe with it in a free and chearful manner; yea, and to love it too? In a word, pore not upon creature-changes

nor

nor the uncertain wheels of motion, that are turning up and down, we know not how, nor how oft; but fix your ſelves upon that All-ſeeing eye, that unbounded underſtanding, that unſearchable and infinite goodneſs that derives it ſelf thorow the whole univerſe, and ſits in all the wheels of motion, governing all the ſtrange motions of the creatures in a wonderful and powerful manner, and carrying them all in their ſeveral Orbs to one laſt and bleſſed end.

Thus imitate the Angelical life, even whilſt you are in the body; converſe with God in ſelf excellencies, in creature-excellencies, Ordinances, Providences: And yet labour to be more like him ſtill, to abſtract your mind from all theſe, and all material and ſenſible things, and to converſe with God without the help of any creature, I mean in the ſpirit, and by a ſecret feeling of his Almighty Goodneſs, and the energy of grace, and the communications of a divine life, in your ſouls. In a word, if you would taſte of Heaven whilſt you are upon Earth, labour

above all things for a true conjunction of your hearts with God, in a secret feeling of his goodness, and a reciprocation of love to him; and to find the holy and blessed God exercising his grace and power upon all the faculties of you souls, and rendring them like unto himself; and all these powers of the soul mutually spending themselves upon him freely and entirely, as upon the chiefest good, which is their proper and full object. Seeing the Saints in glory shall be like unto the Angels of God in their way of living in and upon God alone, receive, I pray, this Exhortation, which I have so largely prosecuted, and labour to begin that life as far as you can, upon Earth. Is there not reason for such an Inference? Doth it not now flow naturally from the Doctrine? If you think it do not, I will add two or three particulars to strengthen this Inference; or at least to clear it.

1. It is highly reasonable that we begin to be that which we expect to be for ever, to learn that way of living in which we hope to live to all eternity: So that I infer upon as strong ground as

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the Apoſtle, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. *He that hath this hope purifieth himſelf, &c.*

2. If this be the life of Angels, then it is the higheſt and nobleſt life that any created Being is capable of. As by the *bread of Angels*, and the *tongue of Angels*, the moſt excellent food, and the moſt excellent language, is underſtood in Scripture; ſo muſt we underſtand this life of Angels. Now it is very ſuitable to the reaſonable ſoul, that immortal, noble Being, to aim at the higheſt and nobleſt life: See *Mat.* 16. 26. *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

3. This ſhall not only be our life in Heaven, but it ſelf is ſomething of Heaven, a beginning of Heaven. This life is not a thing really diſtinct from life eternal, *Joh.* 17. 3. *this is life eternal, &c.* 1 John. 5. 13, *Ye have eternal life.* Therefore we read of eternal life abiding in men, and not abiding in them, 1 *Joh.* 3. 15. So alſo *Joh.* 6. 54. *whoſo eateth my fleſh hath eternal life.* A holy ſoul thus deified, thus living in and upon God, is as truly glorified upon Earth in ſome degree, as the world is enlightned by the morning Sun; which is as

truly, though not ſo glorioufly, as by the Sun in its greateſt height. Oh low and ignoble ſpirits, that can be ſatisfied with a happineſs which ſhall only be in the world to come! Certainly it is true and proper ſpeech to ſay, that a *Participation* of God is an *Anticipation* of Heaven; and to be like unto him, is to be with him. You ſee what reaſon I have to make ſuch an Inference, and to form it into ſuch an earneſt Exhortation: Oh therefore I beſeech you before God and his holy Angels, to endeavour to *be* like him, and *live* like them! *Object.* Say not, How can men on Earth live like Angels! *Anſw.* 1. But fall on and imitate them, though it be —— *haud paſſibus æquis*: labour to be ἀγγελικοι, if you cannot be altogether, ἀγγελοι. 2. We are bidden to live the life of God, *Mat.* 5 *ult. Be perfect*, &c. So 1 *Pet.* 1. 15. *Be ye holy*, &c. If I ſpeak high, how high ſpeak theſe Texts? *Obj.* Say not, But how can this animal life permit this! *Anſw.* 1. For 1, Thus men have lived in the body. Thus lived *Enoch*, *Gen.* 5. 22. Thus lived *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 21. Thus lived

David

David that man after God own heart (the greateſt and moſt divine character that can be given of a mortal man) *Pſal.* 73 25. *there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides thee.* 2. Cannot we live in the body, except we live to the body? You ſee Saints upon Earth live above other men upon Earth, and yet a little more paine take the other flight, and you may live above your ſelves too, higher than you do: I will only add a Motive or two to this duty of living upon God.

1. *The laſt enemy to be overcome, is creature love*: This is the laſt enemy that keeps the field, by which alone the greateſt ſort of men do periſh everlaſtingly; beat down this, and you win the day, and ſhall wear the Crown: nay the very conqueſt of it is a Crown as I ſaid before.

2. *To live upon God in the creature, is to enjoy the creature in the beſt ſenſe.* You will loſe nothing of the creature by this means, but ſhall enjoy it more fully than ever you did. For the creature is ten thouſand times ſweeter in God, than it is in it ſelf. Yea in a word, this is the

way to enjoy all the world, and to enjoy the accomplishments of all men; and all things as much as if they were your own.

3. *It is the may never to lose any thing.* He that lives upon God, spends upon a stock that cannot be wasted, drinks at a fountain that cannot be exhausted. So much as we enjoy of God in the creature, we do not lose with it: and that which we do not so enjoy, we deserve to lose. This then is the secure and honourable life; in comparison of which the life of a Prince is but a wallowing in the mire, *Lord give us evermore this bread*, and hearts to feed upon it. *Amen.*

FINIS.

Dei & Animæ Consortium!

SIVE

Periphrasis in Posterius ἡμιστίχιον

1 Joh. 4. 16.

—— ἐν τῷ Θεῷ μένει, καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

Omnia mihi Deus est; idem Deus est
Ipse Deo totus, totus & ipse Dei.

Omnia mihi Deus est.

In Deo cujusque boni creati
Singulæ veræ primitissimè insunt,
In Deo solaminaque implicantur
Omnia vitæ

Omnis Deus est meus.

Omne quod fecit mihi det benignus;
Omne quod præ se quia nil pependi,
Insuper menti dedit appetenti
Omne quod ipse est.

Ipse

Ipſe in Deo totus.

In Deo verſor medio, que ſpiro,
In Deo grandeſcere concupiſco,
Luceo totus radiis paternâ
Luce receptis.

Ipſe totus Dei.

Non mei, non alterius creati
Sum, (Deus) ſed quantus ego, tuus ſum:
Vita quos â te radios recepi,
Oro, reflectat!

Cuncta te ſubter (Deus alme) quæ ſunt,
Judico mente inferiora noſtrâ:
Abſit ut rebus ſtudeat caducis
Mens generoſa!

Fac teipſum, mi Deus, ipſiorem
Huic meæ menti penitus ſeipſâ,
Fac meipſum, mi Deus, uniorem,
Quam mihi tecum!

God and the Soul:

OR,

A Periphrase upon

1 Joh. 4. 16.

——dwelleth in God, and God in him.

MY God is All things unto me;
All God is also mine:
I am, O Lord, wholly in thee;
And also wholly thine.

God is All things unto me.

The powers of each created good
In God are all contain'd;
In him my Comforts all do bud,
Flourish, and are maintain'd.

All God is mine.

He gave me all that he had made,
All which did not suffice
My larger Soul; therefore I pray'd,
He gave himself likewise.

I am

I am wholly in God.

Vth' midst of God I live and breath,
In him I'm only bright,
The rayes with which I shine beneath,
Are borrow'd from his light.

I am wholly God's.

O Lord I'm not at all mine own,
Nor for another free:
Let life be a reflection
Of beams receiv'd from thee!—

All things below thee (Lord) I judge
To be below my Soul;
Oh let my nobler mind even grudge,
It self in dust to rowl!

Be more my self, O God, to me
Than I my self have been;
Make me, O God, more one with thee,
Than with my self! *Amen.*

FINIS.